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Ideas of the Handmade

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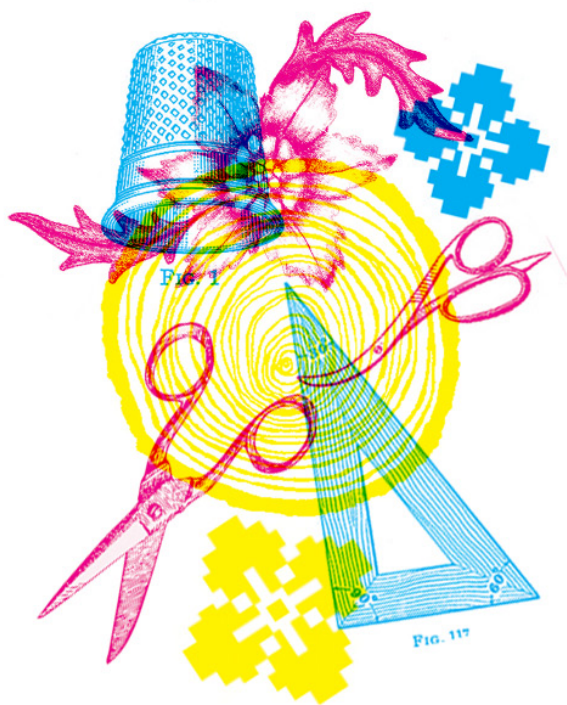
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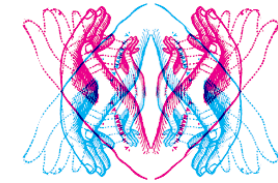
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Ideas of the Handmade

Histories and Theories of Making



Craft Scotland

Dr. Juliette MacDonald and Dr. Catharine Rossi

A publication from Edinburgh College of Art
and Craft Scotland

Based on the 'Ideas of the Handmade:
Histories and Theories of Making'
A Design History Society Day Symposium
Edinburgh April 2012



Craft
SCOTLAND



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art



Published April 2013
Designed by Ailie Hutcheson and Zofia Seymour
Edinburgh 2013

Foreword

Laura Anderson,
Craft Scotland

Craft contributes an estimated £70million to the Scottish economy, from approximately 3,350 craft making businesses.[1] The Scottish craft sector is made up of a mix of makers who work across a vast range of disciplines and materials, using traditional, contemporary and cutting-edge techniques.

Craft Scotland works to unite, inspire and champion Scottish craft. A registered Scottish charity, we create new audiences for Scottish craft around the world by making connections and creating opportunities. Craft Scotland aims to unite the diverse Scottish craft community and connect it with local and international audiences by creating opportunities for makers to exhibit, sell and promote their work, and for the public to see, purchase and learn about craft.

From popup shops, workshops, exhibitions, cinema adverts and international showcases of Scottish craft, Craft Scotland's campaigns, projects and partnerships champion craft and position it as relevant and essential to Scottish culture. The Craft Scotland website provides a platform for craft people and places across Scotland to promote their work and connect to a wide audience. Our innovative approach to marketing and unique curatorial vision has garnered international recognition and opportunities for Scottish craft.

Since our launch as an organisation in 2008, Craft Scotland has built an infrastructure of networks, partners and advocates, as partnership working is a key element in our audience development strategy. We believe that, at their core, partnerships are powered by people with a shared belief in an idea.

The 'Ideas of the Handmade: Histories and Theories of Making' symposium in April 2012 brought together a varied group of practitioners, academics and supporters of craft. The aim of the symposium was to investigate and champion the importance of craft through the presentations of a unique selection of speakers. Connected as we were physically by both the setting of the day and by the distinctive badges created for the event, as an audience we were linked by something more. We were united in the belief that craft is a fundamental and vital contributor to our culture: past, present and future.

[1] Craft in an Age of Change, February 2012: <http://www.creativescotland.co.uk/news/scotland%E2%80%99s-contemporary-craft-sector-%E2%80%99s-optimistic-and-adaptable%E2%80%99-15022012>

Craft Scotland is delighted to be involved in this publication in support of the 'Ideas of the Handmade: Histories and Theories of Making' symposium. The selection of papers from the symposium presented here by Juliette MacDonald and Catharine Rossi serve as an excellent overview of the day, and provide an introduction to the broad landscape of Scottish craft, both contemporary and historic.

This publication marks the first of what we hope will be many collaborations between Craft Scotland and Edinburgh College of Art. We would like to extend our thanks to all the participants of the symposium, to the Ideas of the Handmade editors, Juliette MacDonald and Catharine Rossi, to the contributing writers, and to the ECA Design Agency Anagramm for designing the publication.



Designers' Contribution

Ailie Hutcheson and Zofia Seymour

The editors approached us with the opportunity of designing and launching their new online publication, the 'Ideas of the Handmade'. The whole of the fourth year Graphic Design class presented their ideas to the board members, and we were thrilled to be chosen to take on the design.

The publication is based around a symposium held at the Edinburgh College of Art, which brought together a variety of perspectives and concepts around historical and contemporary craft practice. With this concept of 'craft' as our starting point, beautiful layouts, patterns, and design details were amongst the Arts and Crafts features that inspired our design. In particular, we looked at the detailed designs of William Morris's books; he focused on the traditional methods of print and typographical style of the fifteenth century. With this, we were inspired to think of publications beyond something functional, but rather as a piece of craft in itself, down to the detail of the typography.

Using digital mediums, we interpreted this in our own way by creating a modern aesthetic whilst retaining traditional structures and layouts. Inspired by the thoughts presented in each article, we created a series of patterns, an element very prevalent in the Arts and Crafts movement, and incorporated these along with small details throughout the structure of publication, creating subtle references to traditional layouts. With the patterns as the main decorative feature, the rest of the design and type layout remains clear and minimal. We added a modern twist; using CMYK colours to reference the basis of modern printing techniques in the digital age, creating bright splashes of colour to contrast with the otherwise structured and traditional layout.

We enjoyed the challenges of creating a publication, which could function as both digital and print platforms and still retain an essence of a crafted book. We could not have done this without the help and support of our colleagues, Alexis Ko, Olena Kostrikina, Joanne Little and Rona Skuodas.



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Introduction

Dr. Juliette MacDonald & Dr. Catharine Rossi,
University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art

The twenty-first century has witnessed a renewed interest in craft in terms of individual professional and commercial work and community or group projects. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Etsy and Myspace have offered a platform from which work can be bought, contemplated and reviewed. For many people who might previously have worked in seclusion, or even perhaps in isolation, such sites have enabled and encouraged a wider engagement with and sharing of the creative processes, a set of relationships that David Gauntlett has recently recounted (2011). Whilst operating within the context of technological advancement such community-based engagement with craft is by no means a solely contemporary phenomenon. In the nineteenth century John Ruskin, William Morris and leading members of the Arts and Crafts Movement recognised the value of cultivating craft practice as both a high-end professional practice and as social endeavour. For them, even if objects were 'roughly done' rather than perfectly made, engagement in craft afforded everyday creativity, self-expression and the renaissance of community and the values it represented.

Despite its general rise in popularity, in many respects the contemplation and discussion of craft within academic communities has not kept to the same pace as these wider social developments (Lees-Maffei and Sandino, 2004). It therefore felt timely to develop a conversation surrounding these practices in order to contribute to the on-going narrative and reappropriation of craft as a vital part of contemporary, and historical, culture, and to bring together makers and thinkers who could offer engaging and innovative perspectives on historical and contemporary making.

It was this impulse that drove us to put together a symposium that could bring together just some of the research that is currently being conducted in higher education about craft. In the Autumn of 2011 we applied for funding from the Design History Society's Day Seminar Series initiative with a symposium entitled 'Ideas of the Handmade: Histories and Theories of Making.' Fortunately, our proposal was successful and we were able to turn to a broad range of speakers from a number of higher institutions in Scotland. These were: Annette Carruthers of the University of St Andrews; Francesca Baseby and Ellie Herring, who are both PhD candidates at the University of Edinburgh alongside Andrea Peach, who is also a lecturer at Gray's School of Art; Nuno Sacramento, Director of the Scottish

Sculpture Workshop; Dr Louise Valentine of Jordanstone College of Art & Design and, from Edinburgh College of Art, Arno Verhoeven and Dr Jessica Hemmings – who is now at the National College of Art & Design, Dublin.

An essential aim of 'Ideas of the Handmade' was attempting to represent the broad realm of craft as it has been practiced in both past and present; from its association with traditional processes and engagement, as in the Design and Industry Association in the interwar period and the craft revival that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to the innovative role of craft in prototyping and cutting edge design practice today.

With a packed auditorium, sterling presentations and vigorous discussions, we can confirm that the 'Ideas of the Handmade' symposium that took place in April 2012 was a success. It wasn't the end: in order to ensure that the ideas and discussions that took place on that day were available to a wider audience, we decided to take the event further – hence this publication. Collected here is a snapshot of the event – alongside photographs is a selection of the papers presented that we hope will enable a wider audience to become a part of this discussion, and to benefit from the critical reflections, connections and research presented.



The 'Ideas of the Handmade' audience.
photograph taken by Mark Kobine.

For us, the essential component of all the papers presented in this publication is that the focus is not necessarily on celebrity makers, iconic objects or famous craft events. Rather what is important is that the topics presented raise areas for further consideration, questioning and discourse in order to contribute towards the placing of craft in a relevant and applicable contemporary context. By providing an overview of some of the leading thinking on the subject that is currently being developing in institutions across Scotland and elsewhere, we hope to provide an arena for further reflection and interpretation that will be of interest to a wide audience, from academics to practitioners, students and the public alike. Whatever our relationship with craft – and we all have one – the papers presented at the symposium showed the value of thinking about the ideas we have of the handmade, and using making as a way to examine the world around us.

Preceding these papers is an article by Mark Kobine, a former ECA student, that reflects on how craft underpinned the day - quite literally. We had no run-of-the-mill badges, but one-off confections clefted from Costorphine Sycamore. They were designed and made by Alice Bo-Wen Chang and Mariko Sumioka, both artists in residence in ECA's Jewellery and Silversmithing department, and Mark, then an MA student in Product Design at ECA

and one of the department's artists-in-residence in 2012–2013. Mark is a former DHS essay prize winner, and he was also one of four postgraduate students, alongside Izzy Bocchetti, Jaume Miro and Diego Zamaura, whose contribution on the day was invaluable and for which we are highly grateful.

Collaboration, another key craft quality, has been a characteristic that has enabled and informed every aspect of 'Ideas of the Handmade'. We are indebted to Craft Scotland for supporting this publication, and to the talented students of ECA's Design Agency that are responsible for this publication's design. We would like to our express thanks to Craft Scotland, the Design Agency, as well as the DHS and ECA's School of Design for their generous support that made this enjoyable and invigorating event possible. Finally, we would like to thank those speakers who not only gave up their time to speak at the 'Ideas of the Handmade' symposium but so generously put pen to paper to make an invaluable resource for all those interested in craft.



Nuno Sacramento delivering his paper at the 'Ideas of the Handmade' symposium, on his activities at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop. photograph taken by Mark Kobine.

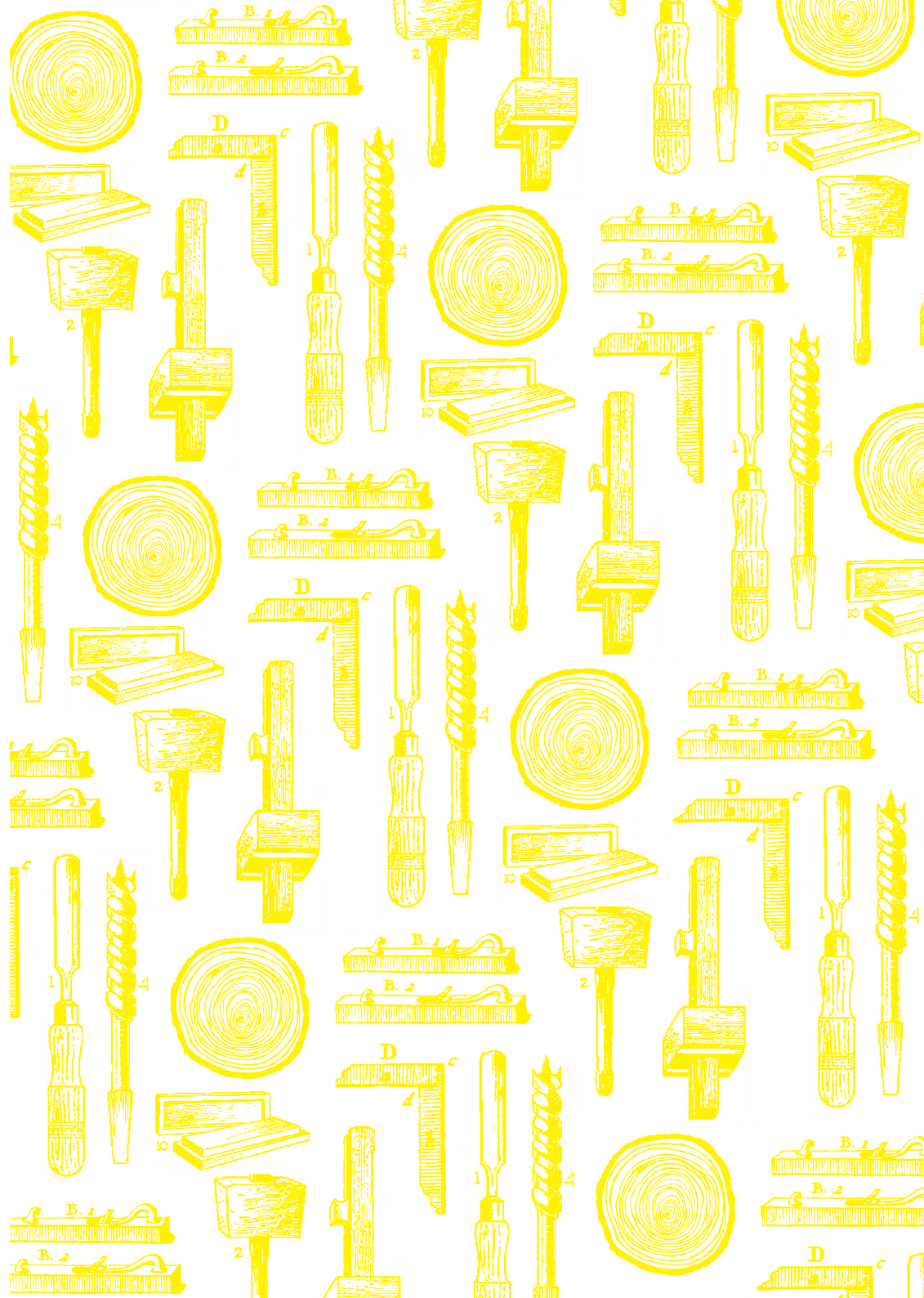
The plenary session at the end of the 'Ideas of the Handmade' symposium. photograph taken by Mark Kobine.



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1



The Making of the 'Ideas of the Handmade' Badges

Mark Kobine

In early 2012 the jewellers Alice Bo-Wen Chang and Mariko Sumioka and myself, a Product Designer, set out to design and make name-badges that would be relevant not only to the concepts in the 'Ideas of the Handmade' symposium but also to its location at Edinburgh College of Art. This suggested that the final objects should be handcrafted and, given the budget, almost free to produce. Despite these restrictions, this was also an opportunity to create a physical memento of the day, an object that could be retained rather than discarded like so many other conference name-badges. Working with jewellers suggested that the result could be a piece that would double up as brooch or pin.

The badges are comprised of two simple parts; a unique piece of sycamore and a formed brass wire component. The pieces of wood are cleft from a lump of the Corstorphine Sycamore that came into my possession. Standing in the village of Corstorphine for between four and six hundred years, this historic Edinburgh tree was felled by a storm during Christmas 1998 (Aitchison, 2007) with a portion finding its way to the art college. This particular lump of raw material came pre-loaded with history. In 1679 the tree witnessed the murder of Lord James Forrester by Christian Nimmo, his niece and mistress. Rumour has it that the tree was haunted by her ghost and there are stories of buried treasure and ghostly voices (Aitchison, 2007).

The process of clefting is a traditional method used to split wood along its grain using a steel peg driven into the end grain. This avoids cutting across the grain, allowing the wood to retain its strength. The grain of a tree embodies its own history – it is a record of its growth – and clefting allows this history to dictate the shape of the final piece, as it is visible in the final form. The brass wire is formed to create both the pin and cardholder. The wire is tightly wound to form a letter 'e' that stands for both Edinburgh and ECA and also holds the name card in its windings.

At the beginning of the day the badges received a warm welcome and worked as a gentle icebreaker. By the end of the seminar the badges disappeared with the attendees, taking with them a small piece of Edinburgh history.



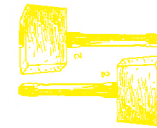
A blank version of the 'Ideas of the Handmade' badge. photograph taken by Mark Kobine.

The 'Ideas of the Handmade' badges, made out of coiled brass wire and a cleft lump of Costorphine sycamore, as seen on the wearer. photograph taken by Mark Kobine.



The structure for the 'Ideas of the Handmade' badges.
photograph taken by Mark Kobine.

Mark Kobine is currently Designer in Residence at Edinburgh College of Art working on a variety of client and personal projects. He specialises in products, furniture and interiors. Studying at ECA he gained first class honours and Masters in Product Design and has exhibited in Edinburgh, Glasgow, at the Scottish Parliament and, more recently, in London at the V&A. He is particularly interested in materiality, our relationship to that material and uses a process that emphasises immediacy and making. In 2011 he won the DHS student essay prize for confusing Heidegger and the TV remote control - one of which is down the back of his sofa.



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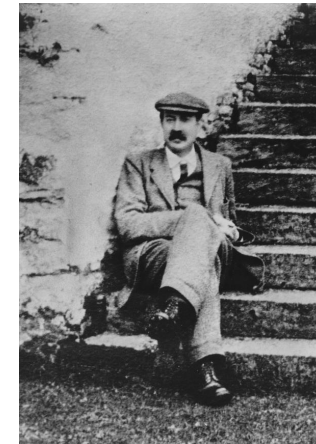


“I See more than Difference – I See Opposition” Gimson, Lethaby and the D.I.A

Annette Carruthers

Writing to his old friend and colleague William Lethaby (1857-1931) in the Spring of 1916, Ernest Gimson (1864-1919) (Fig. 1) put all the arguments he could muster against Lethaby's request that he should make designs for the recently formed Design and Industries Association (DIA). Regrettably Gimson's letters appear to survive only in transcript form, and Lethaby's not at all. [1] The exchange would be far richer if we also had Lethaby's words of persuasion, but his proposals are revealed by Gimson's responses and even this one-sided correspondence tells us much about a pivotal moment for the crafts. It was, of course, a crucial time in Britain for other, more important reasons: the war – and earlier trade war – with Germany formed the background to these discussions and probably made the consequences inevitable. Using these letters and some of Henry Wilson's correspondence I will focus on this short period about one hundred years ago, between 1912 and 1919, but will first outline the context. [2]

Gimson and Lethaby had originally met in London in the late 1880s after Gimson joined the architectural office of John Dando Sedding on the recommendation of William Morris. In 1884 Morris had lectured on 'Art and Socialism' to the Leicester Secular Society in Gimson's home town and the ideas he expressed there, on the central importance of creative work for a fulfilling life, remained an inspiration to the younger man throughout his career. When he arrived in London in the loosely defined and often unpaid role of 'improver' he found himself in the hotbed of the as-yet unnamed Arts and Crafts Movement, working with others who were eager to learn more of architectural practice, to improve design, and to follow the teachings of John Ruskin, in particular his advice that 'the painter should grind his own colours, the architect work in the mason's yard with his men...' (Cook & Wedderburn, Vol.X, 1904: 201). Sedding's office was known for its promotion of the handicrafts and it fostered several young architects who gained renown for this in different fields: Henry Wilson would become extraordinarily skilled and influential as a metalworker and jeweller; Alfred Powell took up pottery decoration; and Ernest Barnsley would join with Gimson in a furniture



¹ Ernest Gimson (1864-1919), early twentieth century.
© Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum

[1] Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, Burrough Collection, 1986.1286: the letters were transcribed by Charles Bramley of Leicester, an early enthusiast for Gimson's work.

[2] Royal College of Art, London, Henry Wilson Collection.

workshop. Barnsley's brother Sidney provided a link with another major practice of the day, that of Norman Shaw, itself already connected by the fact that Shaw and Sedding had both trained under G. E. Street. Shaw's was where Lethaby worked. He was involved in the formation of the associations which are now recognised as the origins of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the 1880s - the St George's Society and the Art Workers' Guild (AWG) - and was an active member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), the campaign group set up by Morris in 1877. In these circles Lethaby and Gimson came into frequent contact with Morris and with Philip Webb, who shared in many of Morris's schemes for the improvement of architecture and design.

In 1890, following Morris & Company's example, Gimson, Lethaby, Sidney Barnsley and several others set up a small firm named Kenton & Company, established to make furniture designed by the partners and produced by skilled cabinetmakers under their close supervision, and also to carry out some crafts themselves, including plaster and leadwork. Kenton & Company exhibited its work successfully but it folded when some of the partners decided to focus on their architectural careers. Gimson and Sidney Barnsley then moved to the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire - rather an anti-career move at this time - but they continued to receive some building commissions and shared a workshop where they experimented with furniture making and plasterwork, along with Ernest Barnsley who was persuaded to join them.

Gimson and Lethaby both designed several fine middle-class suburban villas, a speciality of Arts and Crafts architects in Britain in the 1890s, and Gimson built cottages for members of his family in Leicestershire. Lethaby, already better established as an architect and still in London, had a more diverse range of projects, including two large mansion houses - Avon Tyrrell in Hampshire and Melsetter in Orkney - as well as an office building in Birmingham. Both men believed in employing direct labour under the supervision of a clerk of works who could take creative decisions as the need arose. At one of Gimson's most distinctive houses, Stoneywell Cottage in Leicestershire, he entrusted the overseeing to Detmar Blow, with embarrassing consequences for the budget. More disturbingly for Lethaby, and his commission of a church in Brockhampton, Herefordshire, his clerk of works Randall Wells changed the design of the tower with disastrous consequences. Lethaby felt bound to bear the cost of rebuilding and from this time on focused on his career in education at the Central School and the Royal College of Art. He edited a series of practical handbooks on the crafts and was a prolific author himself, and in 1906 became Surveyor at Westminster Abbey.



² Gimson's cabinetmakers at Daneway, Gloucestershire, early twentieth century. © Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum.

³ Walnut and ebony sideboard with ebony and holly inlay and brass fittings. Designed by Ernest Gimson and made in 1915 by Ernest Smith, Percy Burchett, Peter Waals (foreman) and Alfred Bucknell (metalworker). © Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum.

In the country Gimson established a business, initially with Ernest Barnsley but then on his own from about 1904, and began employing craftworkers such as Alfred Bucknell, a blacksmith. Gradually the cabinetmaking workshop grew, with a staff of experienced men and an intake of local boys as apprentices (Fig. 2). Until the First World War made it impossible to carry on, Gimson employed about twelve workers and his experience of responsibility for their livelihoods shaped his attitude to Lethaby's requests in 1916.

By this date Gimson was widely acknowledged as the finest furniture designer of his generation. The style he developed with the Barnsleys was based on historic exemplars, but reworked to be practical for the modern user (Fig. 3). Simpler in form than most contemporary furniture, it was usually of solid English timber, though there were also veneered and inlaid pieces, and the designs made a feature of exposed construction which enabled the makers to practise their skills at the highest level. Gimson insisted on quality but allowed for the fact that makers would work at different speeds, giving them the satisfaction of being able to do a proper job, and his workshop attracted many individual clients and institutions.

Both Lethaby and Gimson were at the centre of the Arts and Crafts Movement, being active members of the SPAB and AWG and regular contributors to the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (A&CES) which held its first show in London in 1888. The 1912 exhibition was a financial disaster for the Society and there was much agonising over its finances and future; the initiative which had shown great promise was now panned by the critics. This had started in earnest at the 1902 Turin exhibition where the miscellaneous contributions of Society members were contrasted with the more stylistically coordinated submissions of manufacturers, and with the Mackintosh-designed 'Scottish' exhibit. The problem was how to make a coherent display of work by a large number of people, an issue tackled in 1913 by Henry Wilson for the Society's display at an international exhibition in Ghent - supported, critically, by the Board of Trade. Wilson's plan shows his intellectual and architectural solution to bringing this disparate work together by grouping it into sections for 'School', 'House', 'Temple', 'Town', 'Theatre' and other crafts (Manton, 2009: 157). He designed an architectural framework for the room and the display was a distinct success, prompting a request from French government officials for its transfer to the Louvre.

Some visitors to the 1914 Paris showing took the opportunity to travel on to Cologne, where the Deutsche Werkbund also had a display, exhibiting work that had been much influenced by the British Arts and Crafts but was largely made in collaboration with industrial producers. Among those who got to Cologne were Harry Peach, Cecil Brewer

‘Design is too often thought of as an inexplicable mystery, and it is difficult to get it understood that design does not necessarily mean a pattern drawn on paper, nor does it involve some strange originality; but it should be just the appropriate shaping and finish for the thing required’

(Lethaby, 1922: 49)

and Ambrose Heal, founder members of the DIA which was formally established in 1915. Extraordinarily – since Britain and Germany were at war – they had organised a display of well-designed German goods in London in early 1915, aiming to reveal the industrial competition. This was not the first attempt by people heavily involved in the Arts and Crafts to link up with manufacturers and retailers, since the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry had been supported by Morris, Sedding, Mackmurdo, Ashbee, and many others around 1890, but that had folded because the artists wanted to experiment with their crafts and most manufacturers undervalued design. Now the DIA saw another opportunity to get the two sides together and Lethaby was persuaded to join and to write for the new body. His 1915 pamphlet explains his position and provides one of the pithy definitions for which he is known: ‘Design is too often thought of as an inexplicable mystery, and it is difficult to get it understood that design does not necessarily mean a pattern drawn on paper, nor does it involve some strange originality; but it should be just the appropriate shaping and finish for the thing required’ (Lethaby, 1922: 49). The DIA recruited some unlikely people to its cause, such as the Scottish Arts and Crafts architect Robert Lorimer, and it co-opted Lethaby just when he had been asked to become President of the A&CES (which he refused); but it was not able to convince Gimson, as his letters demonstrate.

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The first in the series (29 March 1916), though written in a friendly tone, objected to the DIA’s leaflets and saw the organisation as a danger to the ‘small beginnings’ of the change he was working for. It seemed to be suggesting that the crafts were unsuccessful because they had not linked themselves to industrialism nor ‘recognized the inherent possibilities of machinery: So much said too about distributors & the like & so little about the workmen.’ Gimson wanted Lethaby’s articles ‘for our own side to help us to think more of the man & his work and less of the machine & its product’.

Lethaby had another try and Gimson’s response (18 April 1916) stated his position even more emphatically: ‘What should be the point of view of those of us who are interested in the crafts? & I should like to find out just where the difference between us comes in – why you think I might do some good by designing bookcases for machines while I don’t.’ Like other designers with workshops of their own, he said, he had been faced in unprosperous times with the question of whether to introduce machines, but despite some wavering had decided he would prefer to close instead. ‘And I wish you thought this right – from the craftsman’s point of view. If one’s interest in the work were only that of design & utility it would be different, but it is in the men themselves too & their ways of work & through that to most other things in life, as you know.’

This position was derived from Gimson’s understanding of Morris’s ‘Art and Socialism’ lecture nearly thirty years before, in which Morris claimed that all should have worthwhile work, meaning work that was of itself pleasant to do and done under such conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over-anxious (Morton, 1973: 109–33). Morris did not object to all machines – and neither did Gimson, who came from an engineering family himself: ‘I get more pleasure from a good engine (for it is living work) than from most museums & much more than from the usual Arts & Crafts show (for don’t the crafts want purging & ‘sensing’ as they say here, as much as machine things?’ But Lethaby must have suggested that machines could take over ninety-eight percent of the world’s production, while Gimson wanted to reduce this and allow more room for craftwork. He also saw a threat to his business and disliked jingoism, as this postscript makes clear:

“You see, if I did furniture for machine shops – even though different, one of the results might be (to give a lesser reason) that customers would be satisfied with that & ask for nothing more and not only that but under the influence of D&I pamphleteering they would enjoy the pleasant thing in the trade & their patriotic breasts would be warmed by talk of extending our country’s position in the great world market! and capturing German trade! and one’s other work might not like it! I see more than difference – I see opposition.”

Throughout the correspondence he reiterated certain points: that the DIA ‘would run roughshod over the hand industries as failures and hopelessly out of date’ (10 May 1916); and that the workers were forgotten and this seemed to him to come from false ideals of work. What he wanted was intelligence in the people; this is what he tried to create by running a workshop, employing and training young men who could remain in the countryside instead of having to move to the cities. He was keen to work on a larger scale himself, to ‘design railway stations and rebuild the furniture shops in the Tottenham Court Rd’, and he had produced an ambitious competition plan for the capital of Australia in 1911, but as to setting up machine furniture shops – no! ‘For the intelligence and character of furniture makers I want to see more of their work done by their hands... It is only trade habits and mistaken views that stand in the way.’ Designing for machines was something he could not enjoy and could not do, ‘for I know nothing of the “inherent possibilities” of woodwork machines.’ Lethaby had clearly suggested that the character of such furniture would be ‘thin, hard, precise’, to which Gimson responded: ‘that is the kind to make for certainty but what sort of intelligence would be in its expression?’, anticipating David Pye’s discussion of the ‘workmanship of risk’ (1968). ‘But I can’t call all machinery accurst or anything like all, only where it is unintelligently applied – railways – we will say up Snowden, or turners taken from their lathes to poke sticks into holes in machines: Nobody could enjoy designing turning for machines.’

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Recognising that it 'seems to have been our Craft Eden that made possible the German Werkbund' and the DIA, Gimson felt it might point the way to something better than both if they could carry on working towards their aims and show their application to larger issues such as town planning: 'In our progress, while we have gained so much with one hand we have ... dropped too much with the other. I should like to pay my tax to the age by helping to pick some of it up again'. This too goes back to Morris's lecture, when he looked at his Leicester audience and challenged them to do something here and now, not to think that all problems of freedom and slavery were in distant lands, but to see that low-paid, worthless work was a problem they could help to solve. Wanting to feel that the two agreed, Gimson interpreted Lethaby's support for the DIA as a makeshift policy caused by the war, 'a raft to cling to in the deluge' (5 June 1916), and hoped for the day when Lethaby would abandon his current ideas.

These letters are mainly about the workshop and the men, but Gimson also believed, with Morris, that craftwork was better when done by hand, that it had a quality imparted to it from the mind of the maker. Henry Wilson held similar beliefs, as did Christopher Whall, John Paul Cooper and others in contact with Wilson in 1914 - 1915 as he revitalised the A&CES. Wilson took on the presidency refused by Lethaby and in 1916 organised the largest-ever display of the Society's work, significantly held in the Royal Academy's galleries at Burlington House in London. Despite opening unfinished the display was well received by the public and although the critics had mixed views they were positive about Gimson's part in the show: 'One comes away with the feeling that Mr Gimson is the presiding genius here', the Manchester Guardian reported (11.19.1916).

So in 1916 the craftworkers struck back, defying the arguments of those who said the crafts were irrelevant and promoting handwork as something that exhibited the best of human activity at a time when the brutalities of war were tearing society apart. But of course the discussion continued and the A&CES itself facilitated the debate by providing the DIA with a small space in one of the exhibition galleries, where it showed some manufactured goods of which it approved.

Gimson had plans, with Henry Wilson, to found a craft village in Gloucestershire to continue his work after World War I, but he died after a short illness in 1919 and this came to naught. In a 1924 memorial book Lethaby wrote of him: 'Most of all Gimson was a teacher who doubted words and spoke only in work. Work not words, things not designs, life not rewards were his aims' (Lethaby et. al., 1924: 10). As we have seen, his words were powerful too, but Gimson's achievement was to run a workshop employing around a dozen workers for more than fifteen years, creating the best furniture of the day but mainly producing responsible, intelligent workers committed to quality work.

Gimson's choices were perhaps not available to later generations - and Tanya Harrod has described how twentieth-century craft makers retreated to their specialist workshops, 'more concerned with artistic fulfilment than with social issues' (Harrod, 1999: 28) - but Gimson himself always remained true to the ideals he imbibed from Morris in his youth.

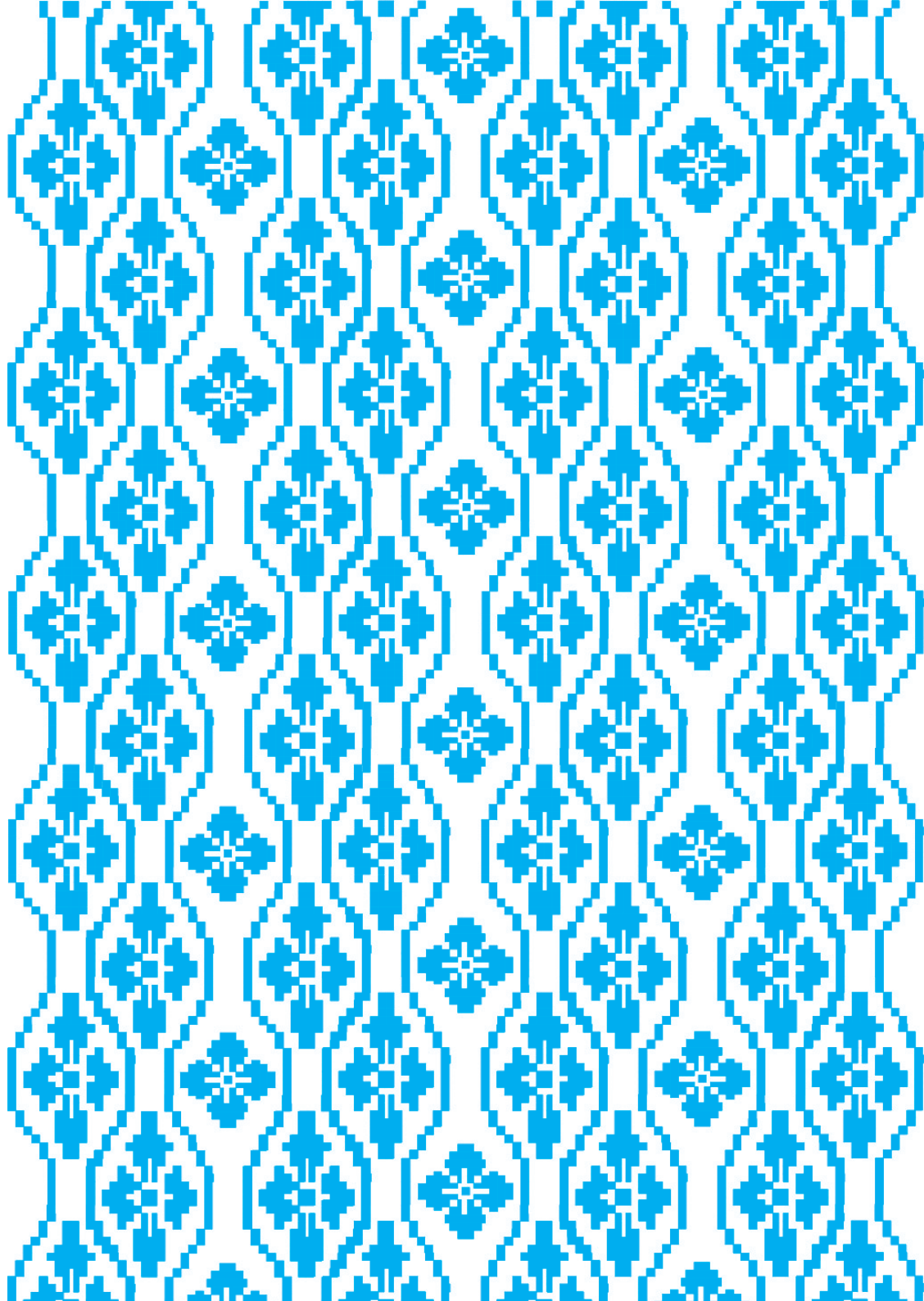


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3



Fact or Fiction?

The Creation of Dovecot Studios' Identity after World War Two

Francesca Baseby

During its one hundred year history, Dovecot Studios has operated within the areas of art, craft and design, pushing and pulling their boundaries and combining aspects of each in order to create a unique way of working. When weaving began in 1912 at a studio in Edinburgh's Corstorphine, it was funded by the 4th Marquess of Bute and its large historical tapestries were destined to hang in his stately homes. Today, in its new home on Infirmity Street, the weavers continue to weave in the same *haute-lisse* (high loom) Gobelin manner, but create works for a variety of locations, including commercial buildings, museums and galleries, domestic homes and even yachts (Fig. 1). These are designed either by the weavers themselves or in collaboration with an external artist-designer.

In the twenty first century there appears to be a gap between the general public's perception of woven tapestry and that of professionals or specialists. For many, the word tapestry brings to mind Medieval or Renaissance pieces, such as *The Hunt of the Unicorn* (1495-1505) or the Sistine Chapel Tapestries, designed by Raphael. It is often only those with a specialist knowledge or interest who are aware of the application of the woven medium by weavers, designers and artists in the twentieth century. These might include the tapestries of John Lurçat, woven predominantly in Aubusson, France, or the work of the Polish weaver Magdalena Abakanowicz. The changes that facilitated such tapestries came about in the 1930s and 1940s in Europe. The use of artists as designers was pioneered by Marie Cuttoli and taken further by Lurçat himself, with the establishment of the Association des Peintres-Cartonniers de Tapisserie in 1945. I have chosen therefore to discuss the work of Dovecot Studios during this time of innovation and change, from the end of the Second World War to 1953, when the studio was taken over by new directors.

As a studio committed to continuing and furthering the knowledge of tapestry weaving in Scotland and beyond, Dovecot has often turned to its history to emphasise its kudos and reputation. For many clients, a studio with a strong history behind it is more appealing than a new start-up. During my research I have examined this history and the myths and fiction that have developed, some of them created in the 1940s, others in later decades.



¹ Dovecot Weavers (Freya Sewell, Emily Fogarty, Douglas Grierson, Naomi Robertson, Jonathan Cleaver, David Cochrane), Edinburgh, 2012, taken for the centenary publication. photograph © Antonia Reeve

These include the influences behind the studio's decision to commission well known artists to design tapestries, the financial affluence of the studio after the war and the creation of a Scottish heritage for woven tapestry.

A New Way of Working: Designs by Famous Contemporary Artists

By the end of the Second World War the 4th Marquess of Bute was in failing health and the future of the weaving studio was uncertain. It was taken on by four members of the Bute family: the Marquess' brother, Lord Colum Crichton Stuart, his children Lord Robert Crichton Stuart, Lord David Stuart and Lady Jean Bertie, and his son-in-law the Hon. J.W. Bertie. As directors, they made the decision to move away from large historical pieces and instead manufacture smaller tapestries that were suitable for the home and designed by 'contemporary artists already famous in their own fields' (Tomrley, 1946). This method of working with external artists, instead of employing an in-house designer as the 4th Marquess had done, continues today.

In recent decades it has been assumed that this was largely modelled on the design methods of France, implemented by Cuttoli and Lurçat. Experienced at commissioning and selling bespoke rugs, Cuttoli acted as an agent and brought together contemporary French artists with French tapestry studios; the first tapestry woven under her supervision was *Les Fleurs du Mal* designed by Georges Rouault, woven in 1932 at Aubusson. This led to a multitude of weavings by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braques, Fernand Leger and Raoul Dufy. Unlike Cuttoli, Lurçat was a tapestry designer and as well as commissioning and selling works to his own designs, tapestries from designs by artists such as Matisse and Leger were woven under his supervision.

The connection between Dovecot and France is not entirely fictional. There was considerable correspondence between Edinburgh and the Gobelins in Paris prior to the Second World War. The weavers visited Gobelins in 1923 and were so impressed by the company's dye works that they became Dovecot's main wool supplier. The Directors of Dovecot after the war were well aware of the successes in France. In 1947, accompanied by their Head Weaver Ronald Cruickshank, they visited the major exhibition of French tapestry at the Victoria and Albert Museum. This included famous historical cycles as well as a selection of contemporary pieces designed by Lurçat and his fellow tapestry cartooniers. However, there was a major difference in the working methods of Dovecot and those of Lurçat and his contemporaries. Lurçat developed a method that gave a

tapestry's designer complete control over the resulting weaving. The artist created a full-scale black and white cartoon, selected and numbered the colours for each area and detailed every element of hatching, shading or patterning to be included in the weaving. In contrast, Dovecot's weavers had a considerable amount of involvement in the interpretation process, and most of the artist-designers did not visit the studio during or prior to weaving.

Though events in France cannot be dismissed entirely as the inspiration for Dovecot's new operating methods, the Edinburgh studio was primarily following the advice of the Council of Industry Design (C.o.I.D.), closely aligning itself with the contemporary British interest in design and industry. In 1946, having written to the C.o.I.D. for guidance, the Council responded with a number of recommendations. First, they suggested Dovecot invite famous British artists to submit designs for tapestry. Next, they encouraged the directors to organize an exhibition to showcase some of their new works.

Why contact the C.o.I.D., which was mainly concerned with industrial design, rather than the Arts Council, which was more in tune with the studio's artistic intentions? Dovecot tapestries were, and still are, one-off handmade pieces created using a weaving method that is yet to be replicated in a machine or factory. The answer lies in the word 'design', and the intricacies of creating an image to be transformed into another medium. The Council of Industrial Design had more knowledge and experience of the difficulties that Dovecot would have faced with selecting appropriate artists. Whose style would be most appropriate for a woven medium? Which artists had proved effective at design work in the past?

What Makes Success: The Dovecot in the Post-war Period

The years 1945 to 1953 were ambitious and productive at Dovecot. By the end of 1949, the weavers had already woven thirteen tapestries intended as wall hangings, as well as a number of small chair seat covers. In order to achieve such an output, seven apprentices were recruited during this period to work alongside master weavers Ronald Cruickshank, John Louttit and Richard Gordon. The studio wove works designed by some of Britain's leading artists: Frank Brangwyn, Graham Sutherland, Henry Moore, Michael Rothenstein, Cecil Collins and Edward Bawden. They achieved national press coverage, with articles in the London Illustrated News, Scottish Evening Dispatch, Vogue and The Times. [1] In 1950 exhibitions were held in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Together, these created an impressive reputation, implying that the studio was highly successful.

[1] 1948. An ancient art which has had a revival in Scotland: Modern Tapestry Weaving at the Dovecot Studios. London Illustrated News, 23 September; Rhind, L., 1948. Scottish and French Tapestries: Stimulating Contrasts in Edinburgh. Scottish Evening Dispatch, 5 February; 1950. Vogue's Spotlight. Vogue, February; 1950. Modern British Tapestry. The Times, 20 January.

It has only been through recent research undertaken by myself and Dr Elizabeth Cumming, curator of Dovecot's 2012 centenary exhibition, that this vision of success has been questioned. I would argue that, due to the commercial nature of the studio, any assessment of its achievements must take into account the company's financial situation. When the Bute family decided to restructure after the war, they incorporated the studio as a formal company, then known as the Edinburgh Tapestry Company. The Directors' Meeting Minutes of this time show that the Directors purchased shares to provide £2,000 [£67,000] capital and it was hoped that further shareholders would be found amongst other people interested in the preservation of tapestry weaving. [2] The decision to weave smaller tapestries was taken in order to make them more affordable for the upper classes and more suited to modern homes. Before production had begun at Dovecot, Lord Robert anticipated that the 'small panels' could be produced for 'about £200 [£6,700] each' (Crichton-Stuart, 1945). Though the decision to produce small tapestries was primarily economic, there was little other choice. In the immediate post-war period, the focus was on building homes, so there were few opportunities for studios such as Dovecot to create large architectural pieces for corporate and public organisations.

Lord Robert's pricing of the tapestries was optimistic. By 1950, after a number of tapestries had been woven and the amount of time taken to weave them was taken into consideration, they were priced between £150 [£5,030] and £1600 [£53,600]. The studio never broke even. By 1953, a handful of tapestries had been sold, including commissions such as the Coat of Arms of Her Majesty the Queen (1950) designed by Stephen Gooden and a Graham Sutherland carpet (1950) for Wilfred Evill. The rest of the tapestries were speculative pieces, meaning that the studio had funded their materials and weaving, and remained unsold. When the new directors, Harry Jefferson Barnes and John Noble, ordered a report into the company's finances, it revealed a total loss of £9,000 [£302,000] (Chiene & Tait, 1954).

As an artistic experiment, the studio achieved great things during this period. It worked with a wide variety of artists, creating unique tapestries that were technically exceptional and which reflected the individual nature of each artist without becoming a slavish copy of their paintings. But as a business, the Company fell victim to poor planning and the difficult economic climate in post-war Britain.

Scottish Tapestry? Weaving Nationalism at the Dovecot

There was a strong nationalist element in the arts in Scotland after the war. In 1997, Cumming identified how the production and marketing of crafts in post-war Edinburgh was concerned with tradition and national identity (Cumming, 1997: 66). This involved a rejection or a suspicion of Modernism that 'now symbolized not a positive future but an abandonment of heritage, an intellectual vacuum' (Cumming, 1997: 66). The 1951 exhibition *Living Traditions of Scotland* was the ultimate manifestation of the ideas in Scotland at the time. In the accompanying catalogue George Scott-Moncrieff wrote: 'Living Traditions. This expression both signifies the traditions by which we live and implies that these same traditions still live. In accepting their importance we must safeguard their maintenance.' (Scott-Moncrieff, 1951)

The exhibition included sections of lace, jewellery, stained glass, ironwork and woodcarving, all were brought to life with live demonstrations of the crafts. Two tapestries from Dovecot were also included: a *Tapestry of Scottish Motifs* incorporating Druar Castle, designed by AW. Williamson, and *Fighting Cocks* designed by Sax Shaw. It is interesting to note that these were distinctly Scottish tapestries (though born in Huddersfield, Shaw had trained, lived and worked in Edinburgh) and the works by English artists were excluded.

The flaw in the inclusion of Dovecot in *Living Traditions of Scotland* is that there was no tradition of tapestry weaving north of the border with England. The Scottish heritage of tapestry weaving was newly constructed through its inclusion in the exhibition and its close relationship to hand-weaving, in which Scotland had a strong history. Regardless of this, the portrayal of the tapestry company as a source of national pride and Scottish manufacture was echoed in other areas. Lord Robert even described the studio as 'essentially Scottish' in a 1945 letter to Buckingham Palace (Crichton-Stuart, 1945).

A marketing leaflet produced by the company in the early 1950s makes clear the importance the directors placed on heritage for their public image. Establishing the link between Dovecot's opening in 1912 and the William Morris tapestry studio at Merton Abbey, it was written that:

[2] All monetary values are shown as their original value with their equivalent value in 2012 in bracket immediately afterwards. This has been calculated using the Retail Price Index, courtesy of www.measuringworth.com, as recommended by the Economic History Society.

‘The enterprise dies with him [Morris]; but not, of course, the craftsmen whom he had trained... and from Morris this handful of work-people received it intact. Since then, the French technique has, for one reason or another, been modified so as, by this series of occurrences, to leave the best of the classic method in the hands of a few Scottish master-artist-weavers’.

(Barnes, early 1950s)

The only British tapestry workshops that predated Dovecot’s establishment in 1912 were English, and the Directors were keen to stress an association with at least one of them: Mortlake (1619-1640s), the Royal Windsor Tapestry Manufactory (1876-1890) and Merton Abbey (1881-1941).

Conclusion

The history of any organization is always subjective, whether based on facts or hearsay. Dovecot’s history and identity is based on both. Immediately after the war, the organization was keen to align itself with the trend for tradition in Scotland, but also to keep up with the CoID’s interest in encouraging artists to design for industry. As the century unfolded, the financial results of the period 1945 to 1953 were obscured by the studio’s artistic innovation and ambition. Questioning the accepted narratives surrounding Dovecot’s history provides a way to understand the intentions and motivations of the studio’s directors and the culture in which Dovecot tapestries were being woven.

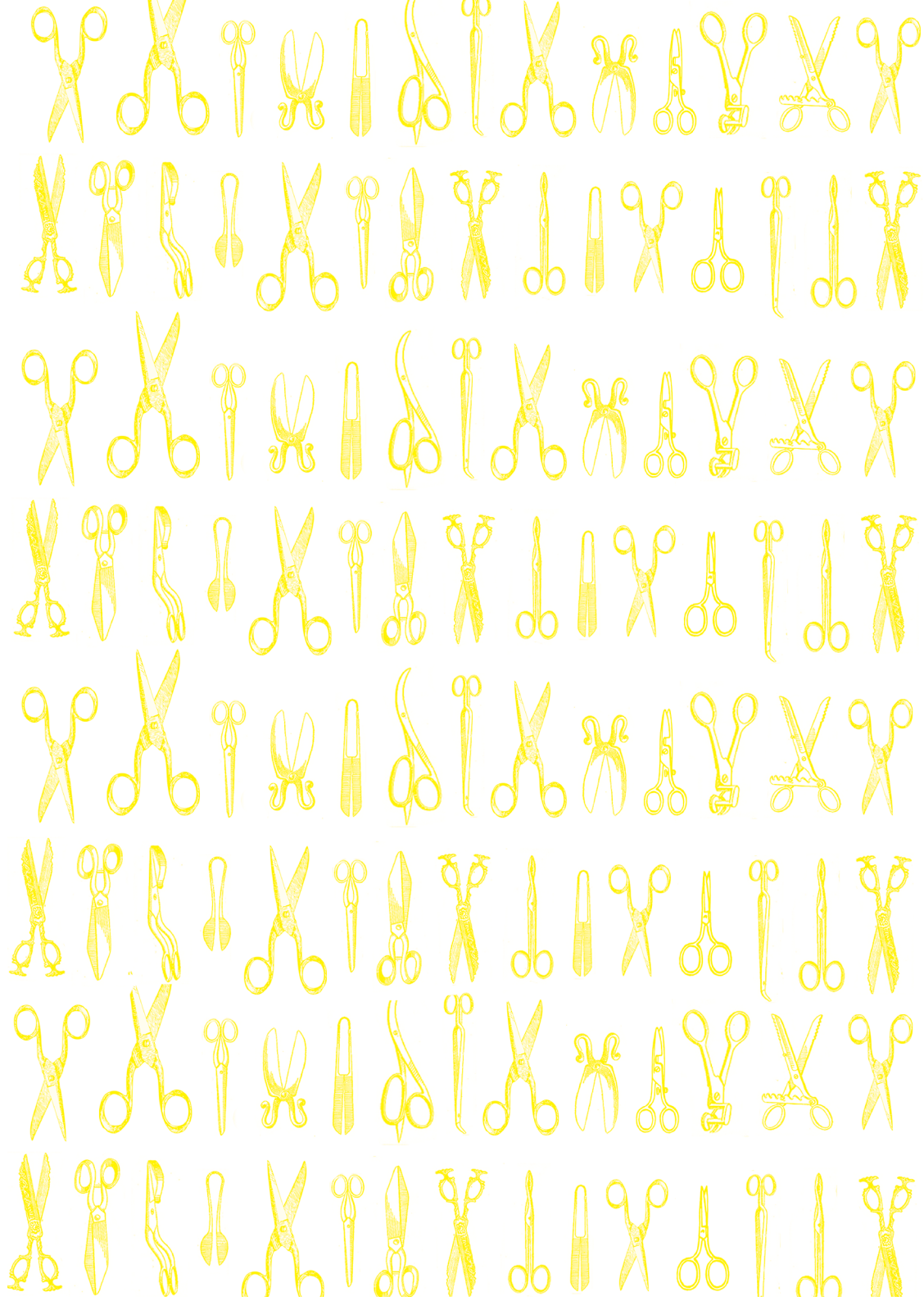


Francesca Baseby is currently undertaking an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award between the University of Edinburgh and Dovecot Studios. Her thesis focuses on the tapestry studio's collaborative activities 1945-1970. She is also a part-time archive assistant for the Scottish Stained Glass Trust. Prior to this Francesca worked as Gallery Manager at Dovecot, Edinburgh and undertook the Graduate Internship at The Fleming Collection, London. Published work includes articles for Embroidery Magazine, Scottish Art News and The Art of Modern Tapestry: Dovecot Studios since 1912 (Lund Humphries 2012).

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4



Crafting Revivals?

An Investigation into the Craft Revival of the 1970's. Can Contemporary Comparisons be Drawn?

Andrea Peach

This paper originates from PhD research which I am currently undertaking on craft in the 1970s, a time which craft historians and theorists generally acknowledge as one of revival and reinvention of craft practice across Britain. Today we are experiencing what has also been described as a 'craft renaissance'. This paper considers whether the craft revival of the 1970s shares any parallel causal features with today. To do this, three areas will be explored: the role of the state, the relationship of craft to contemporary fine art, and the socio-economic climate of the period. Although the breadth of this subject precludes a comprehensive study here, it is hoped that some useful comparisons might be drawn here.

Craft in Britain flourished in the 1970s largely due to the activities of the Crafts Advisory Committee (CAC), now the Crafts Council, which was established in 1970. The CAC was a state-backed, central organisation charged specifically with shaping a new identity for Britain's crafts. Its remit included raising the professional status of crafts, and promoting the craftsman as 'artist'. The terminology used by the CAC to align the crafts with fine art was highly significant in shaping the identity and outcomes of craft production and consumption at this time.

The CAC facilitated and nurtured craft through the allocation of grants and loans, the commissioning and patronage of work, the organisation of exhibitions, publications and publicity, as well as the running of conservation projects and training. It was responsible for the creation of *Crafts* magazine (Fig. 1) in 1973, which is still in circulation. *Crafts* was visually exciting in comparison to other art magazines of the time, containing large colour photographs and profiles of makers involved with 'the new crafts' (Harrod, 1999: 373). Its editorial content was upbeat and underlined the relationship between the CAC and the nascent craft revival.

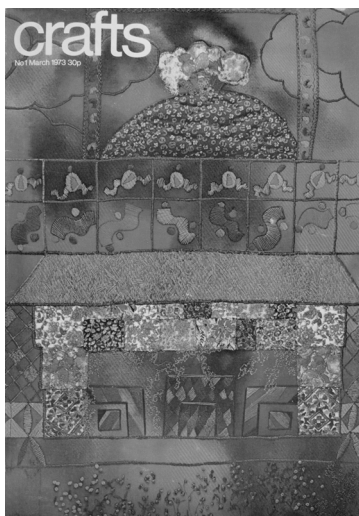
The CAC was noted for its national exhibitions, in particular *The Craftsman's Art* held in 1973 at the V&A Museum, which included 1200 objects from 440 makers from England,

Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. The exhibition had 56,000 visitors and provided an ideological focal point for the CAC and the 'new crafts' (Crafts Council, 1999: 9). The role of government in the promotion of crafts at this time was highlighted in the catalogue essay by James Noel White, Vice President of the World Crafts Council, who wrote: 'Some governments indeed recognise this [the crafts] as part of social and economic policy. Fortunately thanks to the Paymaster General, there are signs that we do too' (White, 1973:11).

It is evident that the CAC played a defining role in shaping and enabling the craft revival of the 1970s through its funding schemes, exhibitions and launch of a high profile magazine. As craft historian Tanya Harrod wrote: 'The 'new' era was, therefore, partly the result of a new institutions' propagandising activities' (Harrod, 1999: 370). However the CAC, with its desire to champion innovative and professional craft practice, could not hold back the wave of interest in both amateur and traditional craft embraced by many craft practitioners at the time (Harrod, 1999: 403). Although the CAC played a crucial role in the 1970s craft revival, in this respect it was unable to entirely control its practical consequences.

Government infrastructure still plays a significant part in supporting and enabling the craft practitioner through the activities of the Crafts Council and *Crafts*, which are still very active today. More recent organisations such as Craft Scotland, whose aim is to support and grow the Scottish sector, also play an important role. Parallels to the 1970s may also be drawn with the recent creation of a 'Craft Skills Advisory Board' to 'ensure that the voice of the craft community is heard at the very centre of government' (Hayes, 2012). This state-backed initiative prompted *Crafts* to feature an article in early 2011 issue entitled 'The Age of the Craftsman' - 'Why the government wants a craft revival' (Hayes, 2011). Although it is early days, the rhetoric of this initiative mirrors some of the CAC ideals of the 1970s, and should be an interesting development to watch.

The 1970s craft revival can also be linked to changes in fine art ideology at this time. Contemporary fine art in the twentieth century was largely defined by the rise of conceptualism, which gave precedence to ideas over making. The art historian Edward Lucie-Smith provided a critical context for the craft revival in his text, *The Story of Craft* (1980), arguing that the renewed interest in craft was a result of changes in fine art: 'there began to appear a hunger for physical virtuosity in the handling of materials, something which many artists were no longer happy to provide' (Lucie-Smith, 1980: 274). As fine artists increasingly rejected traditional craft skills in art, craft practitioners conversely found a renewed sense of purpose through skilled forms of making. However the craft revival could not be characterised solely by a preoccupation with craft professionalism and skill. Craftspeople also looked to ideas in fine art in order to find greater meaning by exploring the avant-garde. This version of crafts was called 'the new crafts' and was encouraged by the CAC. In the words of writer and critic



¹ The cover of the first issue of *Crafts* magazine, launched by the Crafts Advisory Committee in March 1973. Photographer: Rob Matheson, Artist: Judith Lewis. First reproduced in *Crafts* magazine No. 1. 1973.

Peter Dormer: 'The crafts world divides between those who have a conservative ideology ... and those who seek a form of decorative arts avant-garde, based often on a denial not only of function but also the primacy of skill' (Dormer, 1990: 148). To add to this mix was the general upsurge of interest in craft activity in the 1970s, which included amateur, DIY craft as well the revival of more traditional aspects of hand-making. All of these approaches to craft contributed to a situation that can generally be referred to as a craft revival, but with very different agendas and outcomes.

The current craft revival equally owes its existence to ideological changes in fine art practice. As conceptualism began to lose its impetus at the end of the twentieth century, artists increasingly turned to craft as a new means of expression. There are many examples of this, but a recent manifestation was the Henry Moore Institute exhibition *Undone – Making and Unmaking in Contemporary Sculpture* (Sept 2010- Jan 2011), which featured contemporary artists who used traditional and improvised craft techniques and favoured tactility and materiality over conceptualism.

Finally, the craft revival of the 1970s can be associated with a prolonged period of significant political, social, economic and technological change. Useful parallels can be made here with both the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as well as the current interest in crafts. (Minahan and Cox, 2007: 5 and Kaplan, 2005: 11). Each of these periods consistently feature a collective fear of change, including the threat of a loss of individual creative autonomy and quality of life. In these circumstances, craft practice and its accompanying lifestyle appears to offer a meaningful and attractive antidote to change.

In the 1970s Britain experienced a number of socio-economic upheavals, which led to a general loss of confidence in the government and its institutions (Chartrand, 1988: 44). These include the oil crisis of 1973, inflation, an economic recession, growing public sector debt, rising unemployment and industrial strikes. Global events, including the American war in Vietnam, student rebellions in Berkeley and the Sorbonne in 1968, galvanised an emergent youth counter-culture who opposed consumerism and conformism. Added to this, a concern for the impact of industrial processes and nuclear proliferation gave rise to the modern environmental movement while first wave feminism and the questioning of women's roles in society added to an overall atmosphere of change and unrest. It can be argued that all of these conditions were broadly sympathetic to the adoption of a craft ethos, and were a crucial part of the craft revival in the 1970s.

Evidence of this can be seen in *Crafts*, which in the 1970s featured articles about individuals who had rejected a life of urban corporate conformism in favour of moving to the country to set up craft workshops. The idea of pursuing an alternative lifestyle as a craftsperson was depicted as appealing and worthy. However this yearning for a preindustrial lifestyle was largely escapist, and often resulted in a rise of amateur craft activity that was lacking in skill and content (Harrod, 1999: 400). This particular aspect of the craft revival had little in common with the kind of contemporary, quality craft that the CAC was striving to promote.

The socio-economic landscape of our current craft revival shares many points of commonality with the 1970s, in terms of economic instability, concerns over the depletion of natural resources, dissatisfaction with government involvement in wars and a desire to reject consumerism and private sector values. However there are some important differences. Although both movements might share the same yearnings for a simpler, less consumer-driven past, it has been argued that contemporary craft movements such as Stich'n'Bitch reference the past with a sophisticated sense of irony, rather than a nostalgic idealism (Minahan and Cox, 2007: 6). Contemporary crafting is also a less solitary activity than it was in the 1970s, and makes use of information technology as well as social media networks to form global user groups, share information and encourage collective practice. While the current craft revival may critique modernity, it also embraces it.

Examining the craft revival of the 1970s provides an opportunity to critically reflect upon the current attention being paid to the crafts. We have seen the importance of the state in supporting and enabling makers and the limitations of government policy when attempting to impose a particular ideology on disparate craft constituents. It has also been shown that changes in attitudes to craft can be linked to conceptual shifts in fine art. Specific social, economic and environmental concerns such as the impact of mass production and economic recession, dissatisfaction with consumerism, growing environmental awareness and the desire to revert to a simpler life, are also elements which each period share, and which have led to a desire to embrace craft. These causal factors have heralded craft movements over the last two centuries, and strongly suggest that the desire to return to 'making' can be linked with much wider contextual parameters within culture and society.

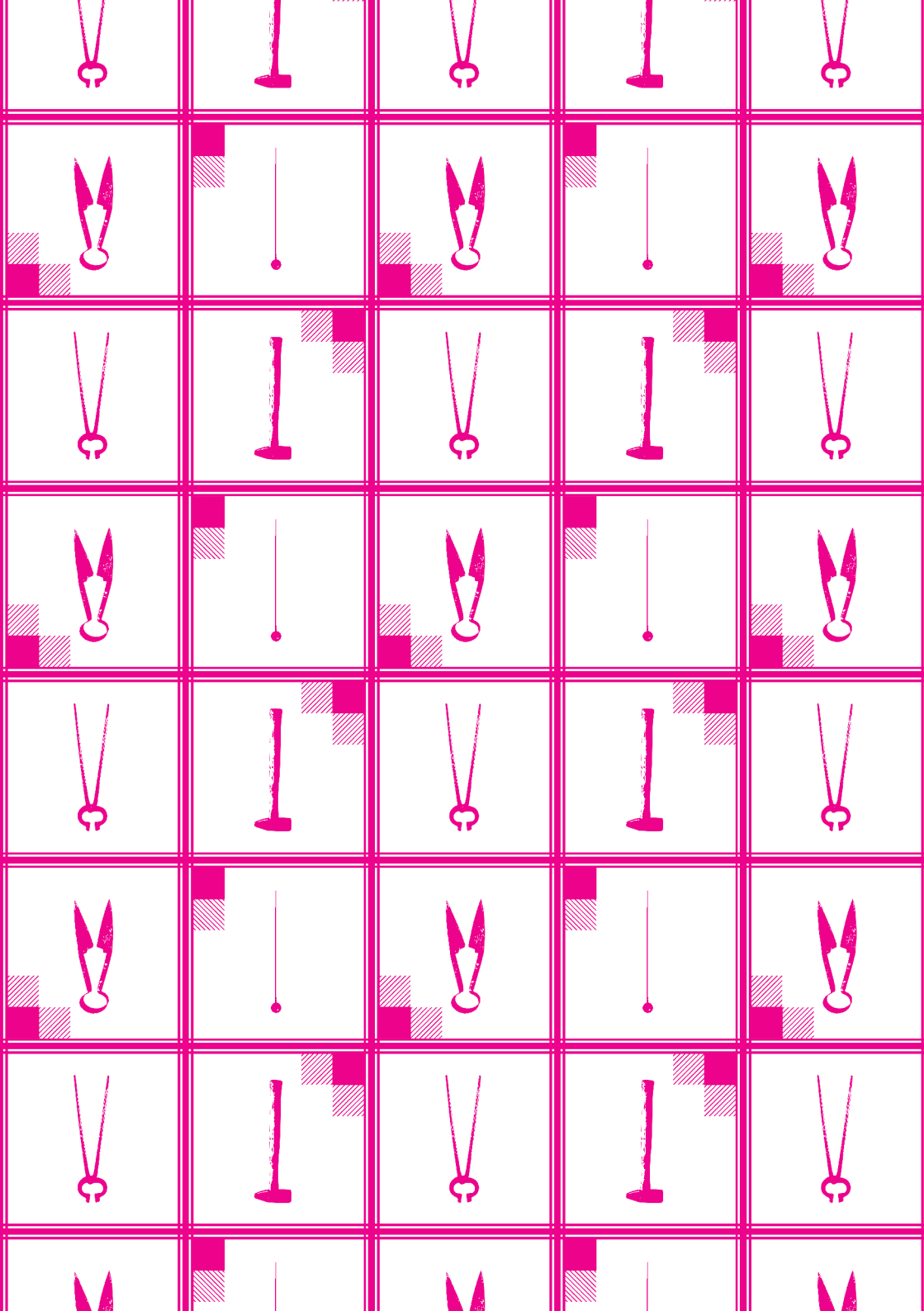


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5



The Lost Hand at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop

Nuno Sacramento

Located in rural Aberdeenshire, the Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW) has been operating since 1979, with the aim to advance the practice of Sculpture. However, the definition of sculpture has changed considerably over time, shifting from commemorative to abstract, from figurative to dematerialized and socially engaged, from privately owned to publicly accessible. As Rosalind E. Krauss argued in an essay from 1979, the year SSW was set up, sculpture should be defined as non-architecture and non-landscape, a definition that includes practices such as Joseph Beuys' proposed notion of social sculpture.

Those of you familiar with arts organisations will recognise that for most of the modernist period organisations were largely closed onto themselves. Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube: the Ideology of The Gallery Space* (1986) presents us with an articulation of modernist galleries and museums that think thick walls keep the world outside, a delimitation assisted by strict protocols of behaviour and specialist indoctrination. This position no longer holds currency at a time when visual art is seen less and less as specialisation, and more as practice that touches upon many other types of knowledge. This turn to the public forces organisations to look outwards and raises a number of questions. Has SSW gone from being an organisation with thick walls to one with no walls? How permeable are our organisations to issues and to people who wouldn't traditionally enter our walls? In the case of SSW there has always been porosity. The nature of the organisation has led to this because it has never been a space where finished works were presented to an audience. It has always been a production facility, dedicated to art and to artists. SSW is dedicated to the making of art, and as artistic pursuits change we revise the processes deployed in making.

The exciting consequence is that we can keep on redefining art and sculpture. We can also decide who else, alongside ourselves, is going to be invited to this debate. Are we going to invite philosophers only, art theorists and academics, only sculptors? Currently, what is interesting is that we seem to have moved beyond the divide between professionals and amateurs, between theory and practice, between strict disciplinary fields: we now have around the table artists, designers, philosophers, historians, archaeologists, and funders, and we can include theory alongside the vernacular and the everyday, we ask the public, our neighbours and our friends for their ideas and opinions, and it is not only a local conversation, but global.

'Foundry Working. photograph taken by Mike Davidson, positive image photography.



The move away from the specialisation of subjects and disciplines and the enquiry into art and its making, has in the context of Aberdeenshire pointed us to the remit of rural crafts. Most of these crafts are now considered heritage crafts, and undoubtedly many will disappear over the next couple of decades. About a year ago we started visiting studios and shops of people that made a living as kilt-makers, memorial stone engravers, wood carvers, coopers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights and so on. Fifty years ago these still constituted a strong part of the economy of the villages and towns across the UK, perhaps with the exception of the wheelwrights. Now their visibility is rapidly decreasing and their relevance to village life moves ever further from central to the absolute peripheral. Their lives are dependent on commissions by people with larger disposable incomes, who buy their way into notions of local identity, of wilderness and of the authentic.

There are many similarities between artists and artisans based in rural Scotland. This is why there is no point in developing an enquiry into art and into making in Aberdeenshire that does not involve both of these communities. They often share the same idea of workspace (studio, workshop), the same tools (hammers, needles, grinders, screw drivers), the same processes (welding, carving, moulding, sewing, gluing) and the same materials (metal, clay, textiles, stone, copper). For all their apparent differences, a studio is just a space and a canvas is just a material, a textile. What brings them to life are the passions and commitment projected onto them. It is this investment that transubstantiates the material into something that is called art.

The Lost Hand

During September 2011, SSW organised *The Lost Hand*, a project that brought heritage crafts people to its premises to work alongside artists. The idea was that these people would come out of their studios, shops and clients' castles and show the processes they deploy in their work, to both other craftspeople and the public. The selection criteria was twofold; firstly that these craftspeople still made a living out of their craft, and secondly that they were recognised by their peers for the quality of their work. They were invited as non-artists coming into an arts venue, and, working alongside artists, asked to demonstrate their artisan ability and their everyday practice. They were requested not to bring finished works for display, but works in progress to continue working on in situ. This was not to be a shop window or a craft fair, but a space of continuous process.

Of course to talk about process in art is quite common, but to a heritage crafts person this means developing a totally new protocol. Why should they want to concentrate on anything other than the finished product?

The Lost Hand welcomed a range of craftspeople, including a cooper, two specialist painters and decorators, a sign-writer, a ceramicist, a stained glass artist, a stone carver, a bronze caster, a wood carver, a kilt-maker, and an upholsterer. This created a buzz of activity within SSW; practice took over, or rather 'occupied' the whole space. The occupation of the workshops through making in its great multitude of forms created a certain life and agency on our site.

This project has helped define a line of enquiry for SSW to pursue in the near future. It has already informed two other projects that we are currently organising, one called *Hard Disc – Skillscape* and another that was instigated in 2012, titled *Slow Prototypes*. The first of the two projects extends the research that was started through *The Lost Hand* and creates a repository where knowledge about local skills and regional expertise can be accessed. The second, relying on this research, creates a framework for collaboration between local artist-artisans and international contemporary artists. The only impediment proposed in it, is that the contemporary artist cannot ask the artisan to make something for them. It forces both to move beyond what are seen as their default positions, impacting their respective practices in ways that cannot be expected.

The Slow Prototypes programme aims to probe the questions - How can collaboration between an incoming contemporary artist, and a local artist-artisan, happen beyond the



² Ian MacDonald, cooper and participant in *The Lost Hand* photograph taken by Mike Davidson, positive image photography



³ Nancy Fuller, ceramicist and participant in *The Lost Hand* photograph taken by Mike Davidson, positive image photography

default position of the first asking the latter to objectify an idea? How can the skills and practice of the contemporary artist affect the skills and practice of the artist-artisan, and vice-versa? How can the traditionally hierarchical relationship turn into a collaborative one, with mutual input and affectation?

The results that the *Slow Prototypes* collaborations have produced so far have explored and extended these boundaries between artist and artisan, culminating in outcomes that blur the established frontiers of each of the creative individual's habitual practices. The first venture within this remit was between local woodcarver Gavin Smith and Berlin-based artist-curator Daniel Seiple. The pair worked together over the course of a month, between Smith's remote home and studio in the heart of Strathdon and SSW. Coming from completely disparate disciplines, they took strides to find grey areas between both of their skill sets, resulting in the mutual curation of Smith's abundant woodpile resources, creating an architectural installation on his property that acts as a viewing platform to the surrounding area. Instead of the artisan carving the wood, the structure itself carves a spatial intervention in landscape.

The research drawn from *Hard Disc* and the experimentation involved in *Slow Prototypes* will go on to see more dynamic cross-collaborations in the future, moving beyond skill in only practical terms, into collaborations between contemporary artists and those whose practice and expertise form a repository of knowledge of life in Aberdeenshire. From the forger to the hotel manager, from the farmer to the archaeologist, we intend to activate a worthwhile and beneficial experience for all people involved.

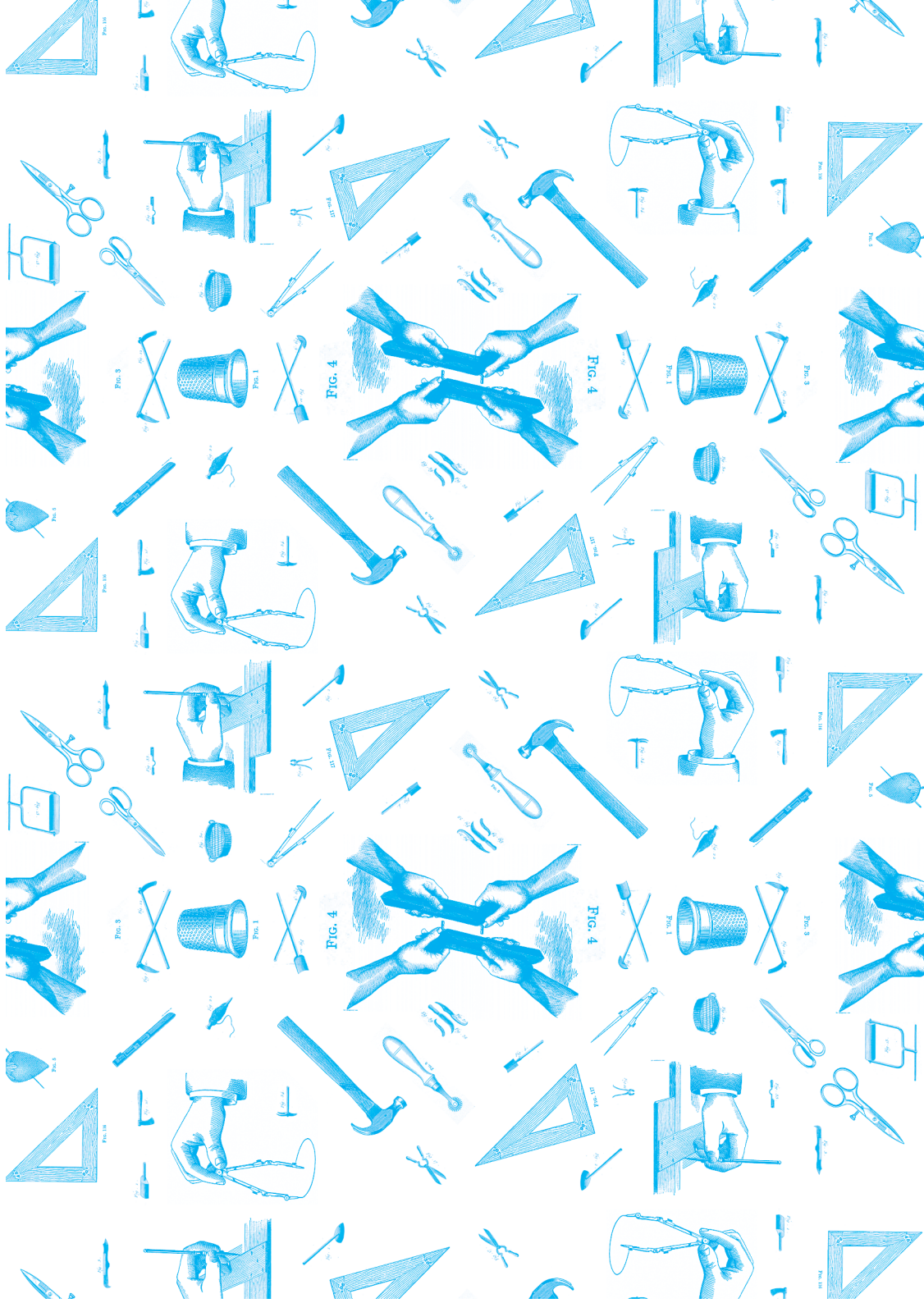


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6



Craft Communication & Innovation

Dr. Louise Valentine

Craft has witnessed an upsurge in critical debate this past decade and the sector has much to be encouraged by as a result of this increased attention. Alongside a plethora of new books dedicated to the debate, most notably the work of Glenn Adamson (2007; 2009; 2013), there is the addition of a first series of academic journals, namely, *The Journal of Modern Craft* (published by Berg in 2008) and the journal *Craft Research* (published by Intellect in 2010).

In the UK, new knowledge and greater awareness of craft was supported by, for example, the emergence of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (2005), the arrival of Craft Scotland (2007) and the continued work of the Crafts Councils in Ireland, London and Northern Ireland. This recent investment is significant; it denotes a transformation in attitude and behaviour towards the leadership and management of craft in the contemporary world.

From this perspective, it is reasonable to suggest that momentum has gathered and the issue of why craft needs to rethink its cultural, economic, political, social and technological relations with the world is being attended to. Emerging from this landscape is the exigent problem of mindfully managing this asset to receive a return on investment that effectively supports craft in all its guises; the asset being how craft engages with the principle of uncertainty. Sustaining change is now the important challenge.

Critical Craft

I propose a new term be added to the lexicon of craft - 'critical craft': an analytical form emerging from the praxis of craft research, concerned with scholarly questioning of an idea and its place and impact in the real world. Critical craft builds upon my design research (2004; 2009) and focuses on articulating craft as a strategy and developing reflective management tools to support innovative practice (2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2010; 2011).

In this work, the development of new mechanisms for partnership creation and relationship management between higher education, the craft sector and the public is

integral, with prototyping as a primary method for extending the craft dialogue. [1] That is not to say that other people are not engaging in this emergent practice nor that there is one particular 'form' associated with it, rather it is simply a means of capturing and contextualizing the 'change' and a proposition as to how it can be nurtured and extended.

The issue of innovation has quietly gained greater precedence within my research (2002-2012) on communicating design and craft. Innovation has been studied in four ways; through communication of an object, as a process employed when creating and realising an idea, as a service for facilitating new activities, as ways of working and/or markets, and as an environment. For the purposes of brevity, each of the four ways will be raised and key points noted. As the objective of the essay is to be discursive, full critical discussion of each is not proffered.

Innovation: Craft Practice as a Process

A key trend evolving from emergent craft discourse is a shift from conventional theories, methods and projects towards innovative research design. There is a definite change that embraces diverse theories of practice and production. Implicit in this is a need or responsibility to rethink how craft communicates.

A new approach to communication was investigated; one that complements existing work communicating the value and values of craft (Dormer, 1997; Margetts, 2007; Metcalfe, 2007; Verhoeven, 2007; Woolley, 2007; Yanagi, 1978). When explaining their profession, what does the craftsperson mean when s/he use the word 'practice'? Mainstream communication of craft emphasises the material and technical aspects of making an object by hand. But, what if craft stopped relying or emphasizing the object or final product- how should it communicate the term 'practice'?

Drawing on the work of sociologists Bentz and Shapiro (1998) my research proposed a shift from craft as a material and technical concern for making an object to that of craft as a life-world. [2] In constructing a ten-year timeline of professional craft, layers of activity effecting an individual's decision making process were identified through a series of interviews and visual mapping techniques (Valentine, 2011). The process resulted in a new definition of 'craft practice', re-presenting it as a series of inter-connected activities, processes and

[1] 'Prototype: Craft in the Future Tense' is an example of this work; a two-day symposium co-convened with the V&A, in 2010. Further information can be found at: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/djead/prototyping/> [Accessed 24 September 2012].

[2] A 'lifeworld' is essentially 'the world of everyday life'. For example, the author's life is situated within the field of design, having trained as an industrial designer (textiles) and developed her visual thinking through interactive media over the past decade. Richard Buchanan's philosophy of design has shaped her knowledge of design and her understanding of its role within contemporary society and culture. Buchanan's work emphasises the rhetorical dimension of design thinking and is discussed in the context of the liberal arts. He articulates design as both a language and a meta-language.



¹ A snapshot of (four of the ten-year) visualisation map or 'cultural enrichment cycle' for Tim Parry-Williams.

competencies, nurtured over a lifetime to facilitate creative, cultural, economic and/or spiritual wellbeing (Fig. 1). [3] In doing so, new knowledge of craft practice was created. Its visual form also affords the practitioner a means with which to engage and reflect on why, how and what they are making. It potentially facilitates how the level of innovation in practice is heightened and hindered and where change could be made to enhance craft.

This method is one way in which critical craft, the mashing of mainstream craft and research methodologies (in this case social science) can result in genuinely new tools to service the professional practitioner and sustain change in craft.

Innovation: Craft as Object

In the twentieth century the mainstream approach to craft production was for a craftsperson to undertake sole responsibility; it was an integral element underpinning the craft methodology. Over the period 2005–2010, in my study of past, present and future craft practice (Valentine, 2010; 2011) a number of observations were made, including the introduction of co-production and community involvement in the creation of ideas and their final forms (White, 2010); the employment of co-creation, where new work is developed collaboratively (Marshall, 2007) and across cultures (Parry-Williams, 2007); use of craft knowledge as a means of designing with interactive technologies (Kettley, 2007; Wallace, 2004; White and Steel, 2007), the re-modelling of computer programmes to produce individually crafted objects using CAD-CAM (Masterton, 2007) and a general increase in use of highly sophisticated technologies to design and manufacture one-off or small batches of objects (Bunnell et al, 2007; Mann, 2010). These new developments indicate for some craft practices a lessening of the idea of skillful making being a pre-requisite of future craft. It also opens up craft debate enabling broader and more open methodologies for craft to engage with.

Hazel White and her *Hamefarers' Kist* (2010) is an exemplar of the shift in approach to making and is cited here as an example of co-production (Fig. 2). [4] However, the reference to White's work is to focus on communication of craft in the context of innovation rather than describing it in terms of co-production. First however, a reference to the wider context for communicating craft.

The *Hamefarers' Kist* is a small decorative box containing a series of uniquely patterned knitted 'pincushions' containing RFID tags which, when placed on an RFID reader (in the box) activate a computerized application that 'calls up' online content and displays it on the small monitor display in the box lid. In doing so the *Hamefarers' Kist* family members

[3] For the purposes of brevity, this discursive paper does not detail the study but further detail is documented in an existing publication (Valentine, 2011).

[4] Hamefarer is the local term for a Shetlander who returns to visit the islands.

If we use innovation as the context for introducing *Hamefarers' Kist*, we could say it is concerned with embedding memory in objects through interactive technology to support the wellbeing of elderly people. It is mindfully designed to support geographically remote communities and geographically distant family members to care for one another.

It is suggested there is a distinctly different tone and emphasis when communicating craft using innovation as the lead; innovation requires the idea and its relation to a problem to be articulated first, before explaining how it's been achieved and describing what was done. *Hamefarers' Kist* is an example of the value of critical craft's relation to articulating the innovation of Scottish craft of which there is, as yet, no approach nor conversation. By giving innovation a stronger position in the lexicon of craft, the sector has an opportunity to facilitate social and cultural change, and in doing so, enhance the general perception of craft.

Innovation: Craft Research Partnership as a Service

Today in the UK, the annual income for the majority of professional craft practitioners is approximately £16,000, which is significantly less than the current national average wage of £22,568 (Office for National Statistics, 2012). This means it is increasingly difficult for a craft practitioner to invest in research and development, which in turn restricts product innovation and business growth (Marshall, 2007; MacAuley and Fillis, 2002; Morris, Hargreaves and McIntyre, 2007).

Compounding this is the sharp reduction of economic investment in the crafts by public sector bodies and, in relation to this, the viability of craft as a sustainable career path that meets the financial and creative imperatives of the individual (Galloway et al. 2002; McAndrew 2002; Davies and Lindley 2003). To date, access to public money via creative development and travel awards, to give two examples, have been central to the craft practitioner's business model. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest an alternative approach to developing the core product of a craft business is required to support sustainability and growth.

How can the emerging field of academic craft research work in partnership with the profession of craft and public sector bodies to develop a dialogue that facilitates an increase in the level of innovation in craft practice? To what degree, if any, can the new resource and infrastructure of craft research add value to the professional practice of craft?

² Hazel White, *Hamefarers' Kist* (2010).
© Photograph by Malcolm Finnie.



Between 2008 and 2011 a research and development (R&D) programme for improving craft practice through the provision of mentoring by academic design and craft research practitioners at a third level Scottish University was piloted. It aimed to facilitate the development of innovation in professional practice through a bursary award created in partnership with Creative Scotland. [5] In the R&D programme 'craft practice' was used as umbrella term to embrace the diversity and transformation of form and meaning in all craft contexts. The programme was designed to encourage deep thinking, experimentation, risk taking and ambitious social networking: it was serious play (Schrage, 1999). It sought to encourage this by giving access to high technological tools, which are privileged by higher education, and creativity research expertise.

The mentoring service was honed and developed over four years. Eight professional craft practitioners and eight mentors participated in the qualitative study from which thirteen areas of potential growth were identified: personal confidence; new product development management; the quality and/or range of product(s) being designed and/or produced; the

[5] Creative Scotland came into being in 2010; it is a bringing together of Scottish Screen and the Scottish Arts Council. Prior to this, the bursary awards were created in partnership with the Scottish Arts Council, in particular the Head of Crafts Division, Dr Helen Bennett.

level of innovation in design practice; greater technical knowledge and skills business strategy and planning; capacity to identify new audiences; ability to extend their professional network; facility to reach new markets; marketing knowledge and skills; budgeting capability and, time management competence. There were twenty-eight mentoring mechanisms put in place with twenty positive impacts recorded to date (Valentine and Fillis, 2013).

The qualitative study offers a sample from which to ascertain the potential usefulness of craft research as a resource and infrastructure to supporting the economic viability of craft as a sustainable, lifelong profession. The work to date indicates it offers unique qualities to a mentoring service and that it has produced positive creative, economic and social results for professional practitioners. For example, new markets have been reached and successfully entered, new job opportunities have been offered and accepted, stronger brand identity achieved and, increased confidence as a result of new works, ways of working and relationships developed via the R&D programme.

Awareness of the existence of craft research and its value to professional practice remains essentially elusive and inconclusive, yet through partnership with Creative Scotland, HI-Arts and the craft community, a basis for improving the service now exists. The challenge today is to understand how to capitalise on this and decide what measures to put in place to effectively extend the model. Is it, for example, a service that can be offered through all four of Scotland's art colleges and in partnership with the public sector and industry?

Innovation: Craft and its Environment

The fourth way in which craft and innovation are to be considered is within the context of environment, as its engagement with the public is a critical aspect of craft communication. Museums, galleries, institutions, organisations, shops, cafes, homes, gardens and the human body can all be considered as environments of and for craft. The human mind is another environment; how we perceive craft is fundamental to why and how, if at all, we engage with it and the level of engagement we are prepared to enter. Non-spaces or the spaces inbetween can also be considered as environments for craft, indeed, craft activists vigorously promote this way of engaging with society and culture (Bursh and Black, 2009).

In considering craft communication, innovation and environment, questions appear in abundance. For example: what is an effective curatorial strategy for communicating critical craft within a highly digital culture? What does it look like? What should it look like? Is there an over reliance on how craft has approached curation in the past? Should craft further understand how innovative environments and technologies could extend its dialogue? Are the mechanisms for facilitating new relationships in place within existing 'environments'? What do we mean by 'environment'? Who are our 'audiences' today?

Recent exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, such as *Decode, Out of the Ordinary: Spectacular Craft, Quilts: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories, The Power of Making and Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970 - 1990* exemplify how craft is approaching communication, and how institutions and organisations are working together to build new audiences through a diversity of work, curators, exhibition design and associated programming. Closer to home, Dundee Contemporary Arts hosted the 2010 Chicks on Speed exhibition '*Don't Art, Fashion, Music*'. Chicks on Speed's work presented craft as performance and craft as a political and social statement; a dynamic, elusive experience. The exhibition also launched *Guitar Stiletto*, a stiletto shoe which doubled-up as a playable guitar, which resulted from an international collaboration in terms of its creativity, design and production. Through their collaborative activism, Chicks on Speed posed a fundamental challenge to mainstream perception of craft; its place, form and meaning in the modern world.

Yet, despite exhibition successes, the positive contributions of public and third sector organisations such as Craft Scotland and, the proliferation of craft research as a new form of practice, craft arguably remains an overly soft, unheard voice. In contemporary Scottish culture - and its associated economies - there is untapped potential as craft is without a significant exhibition environment to champion its relevance. This raises the question of how crafts sustain change in the context of space, place and engagement with people.

This is where V&A at Dundee comes into view. The V&A at Dundee is a national project seeking to deliver for Scotland's creative industries an agenda to support micro-enterprises in achieving economic viability as of part of its portfolio. It is an internationally designed building (Fig. 3) and as an initiative, invites propositions for engagement and partnership. As a collective community, what will craft's propositions be? One surely must have to be craft in the context of innovation, where its innovative competency is the headline. This methodology can then be compared with mainstream methodologies, thereby extending craft knowledge and placing it in a position for change.

Closing Thought

In this discourse about craft and innovation, I have made reference to my research of the previous decade and in doing so pose questions for the next ten years. In the ‘futures’ part of this discussion, V&A at Dundee has been introduced as a future leader of craft; a leader in the context of co-creation, co-design, co-production, commission and collaboration where new national partnerships are nurtured for prolonged creative and economic wellbeing. V&A at Dundee is an opportunity to facilitate social, cultural and economic change within Scottish craft, but how and if craft will approach and embrace it is a conversation that remains to be mindfully explored.



³ A computer-generated image of the architecture for V&A at Dundee, designed by the Japanese firm Kengo Kuma and Associates (KKA).
© Kengo Kuma and Associates and V&A at Dundee.

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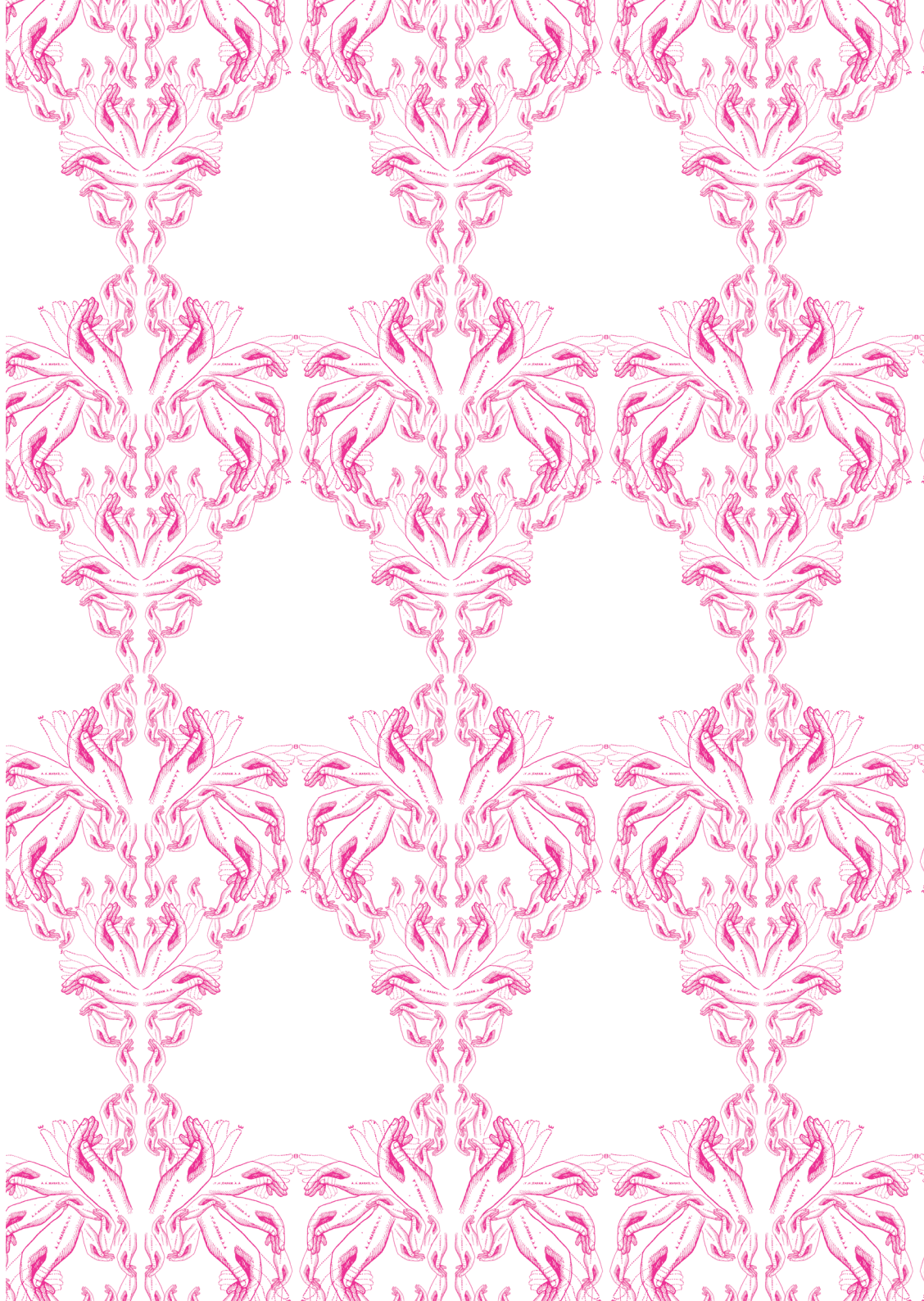
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FIG. 116

7



From Concept to Creation.

Low-fidelity Prototyping and its Role in Designers' Sense-making: a Protocol Analysis

Arno Verhoeven

Contemporary product design is a complex activity, often involving many people who assume a variety of roles during the process. Designers charged with the creative development of projects will often need to talk to marketing teams and brand consultants, manufacturing technicians and engineers, and in some design situations, directly with clients and end-users. What presents a challenge in this regard is that the object or output of a designer's intention is never fully formalized; the nature of improving, changing, or designing novel solutions means that what is being proposed by a designer can only exist in bits and pieces, and to communicate new intentions, designers resort to using a variety of representative symbolic artifacts. These intermediary objects (Vinck and Jeantet, 1995), are defined as being:

“...objects [that] act as boundary objects in the sense of Star (1989). But intermediary objects are also intermediate states of the product if we consider the objects as mediators translating and representing the future product.” (Boujut and Blanco, 2003)

Simply speaking, designers predominantly refer to these types of objects as prototypes. The use of physical prototypes is evident across various stages of design development, and these objects can be seen as physical representations concerning cognitive structures, product categorisations and feature sets shared across design teams. (Subrahmanian, 2003, Sefelin et al., 2003). What remains challenging, however, is the lack of a common framework for describing prototypes (Broek et al., 2000). Research investigating how designers make use of prototypes, in their various states, shows the impact of their use on design teams is not clearly understood (Edelman and Currano, 2011).

The literature examining the use of prototypes during product design development has focused mainly on intermediary prototypes that already exist in the presence of

“...objects [that] act as boundary objects in the sense of Star (1989). But intermediary objects are also intermediate states of the product if we consider the objects as mediators translating and representing the future product.”

(Boujut and Blanco, 2003)

the design team (Viswanathan et al., 2011). For this paper, we examine a more local level, situated during design development episodes, and suggest that the actual making and construction of intermediary objects, as well as the finalised artifacts themselves, play a key role in clarifying both the individual designer's thinking, while also serving to facilitate communication of representations across a group. We are working from a premise that design is a materially focused, reflexive activity (Schon, 1984), but has become significantly complex and involves the participation and investment of many other stakeholders. Design activity, in this regard, is seen to be socially as well as cognitively oriented. In order for a design project to move forward, many forms of social communication take place, involving different kinds of design behaviours, including drawing, making, and perhaps, not so obviously, talking (Oak, 2011, Blackwell et al., 2009).

To understand the relationships emerging from these interactions, we suggest a sociological view of design is necessary, where the intermediary object is a silent actant, amongst our network of actors (Callon, 1986, Latour, 2005). In this regard, the emergent future product of the designers' intentions is not viewed as pre-determined or fact, but rather as a negotiated outcome, occurring over the course of a design trajectory. Negotiation between design actors is no longer considered to be limited to sentient actors, but lo-fidelity prototyping strategies becomes part of this process, where negotiation can be re-framed as the making process and the iterative generation of successive prototypes. Basic materials and processes now serve as a social means to communicate with other designers, and for the individual designer to more clearly grapple with complex issues related to future material manifestations of the designer's intentions.

Methodology

Designed objects, whether they be final products or intermediary prototypes, do not speak for themselves, though are clearly open to individual interpretation by parties involved in the design process. In order to develop a clear perspective of the impact that low-fidelity prototyping plays during design development, a way of relating intention and understanding amongst our various design actors is required. The design process in this paper is considered sociologically, and we intentionally refer to it as a trajectory, which "...refers to a course of action but also embraces the interaction of multiple actors and contingencies that may be unanticipated and not entirely manageable" (Strauss, 1993). Through framing the design process in this way, it is suggested that a grounded theory approach may be suitable for this research investigation, which makes use of a constant comparative methods in order to uncover theoretical frameworks.

Twelve students enrolled in a taught postgraduate product design course were observed over a period of eleven weeks during a second semester studio project. Students were engaged in research activities in a previous semester, having synthesised their research observations into a design brief and a series of design sketches and drawings suggesting ways they might translate their research findings into a product strategy. At the start of semester two, all students were asked to develop a prototype that could serve to address their design brief. The prototype was required to be deployable and tested by a specified target group. Based on user testing and feedback, the prototype was to be refined and finalized, ultimately constructed to be presentation ready during their third semester degree exhibition.

Tracking iterative changes to the intermediary prototypes across the design trajectory provides one perspective of a designer's understanding; the introduction of the intermediary object, exchanged between actors, provides the opportunity to confirm or deny whether the next step in the trajectory is mutually understood. Though the object remains silent, its introduction to the network of actors suggests it "speaks" to various members differently, given the richness of information a physical object puts forth. Though the object does not make utterances, our actors do, and it is here suggested that the exchange of dialogue across the network, the conversational turn-taking regarding the object and its function, behaviour, structure, processes and other future manifestations is negotiated and confirmed through talk across the network (Oak, 2011). In this sense, tutorial discussions with each student regarding their progress, including discussions with other partners, new insights and understandings, future possibilities and limitations discovered through supplementary research provide a secondary symbolic exchange that assist in guiding and managing the design trajectory towards an intended, yet not fully formulated, future state.

Each of the twelve students had selected a research topic of personal interest, and identified appropriate research strategies and approaches to address their individual topics in semester one, leading to highly individual translations and proposals at the start of semester two where the prototypes were to be developed and constructed. This format necessarily precludes any direct comparisons between students for our research investigation. Rather, we suggest that patterns or working ascertained from individual projects can be coded and compared across projects. For this reason, a case-study approach was selected in an attempt to identify any commonalities or patterns across projects. For purposes of this paper, one particular case-study is presented in order to provide greater clarity through a detailed example, including a simple visual overview of the trajectory of the intermediary prototype and the relationship involving the discussions surrounding it.

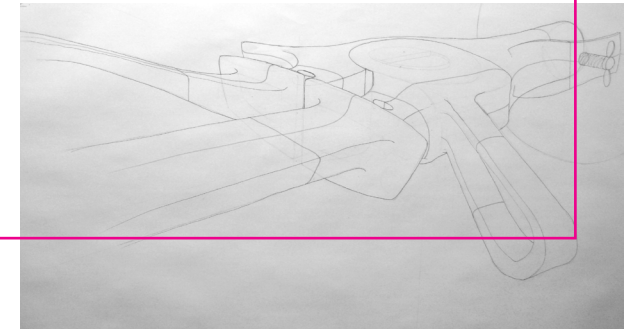
Tales of the Handmade - A Case Study

RC is a postgraduate product design student who initially expressed an interest in the relationship between design and biomimicry. Through detailed precedent research, interviews and observations, a design brief was constructed that identified an opportunity regarding prosthetic limbs currently used by amputees. RC's research outlined two current trends in prosthetics. Firstly, robotics and bionics were providing a comprehensive substitution for human limbs and appendages, yet remained costly and technically immature, though presenting great potential. Secondly, however, low cost prostheses, which are currently distributed through the NHS, were aesthetically unpleasing, often unwieldy and continued to be fabricated in line with patents that were over one hundred years old. Identifying another technological approach, through Additive Layered Manufacturing (ALM), RC suggested that an affordable alternative to current prosthetics could be delivered allowing for quick customization and individualization through 3D CAD and ALM solutions.

RC enlisted the support of an amputee who continues to work as a bomb disposal expert, though having lost his right hand through this dangerous line of work. Through observation and detailed interviews, RC constructed a detailed knowledge and deep insight into the everyday world of his client, and suggested that he could design a series of customized prosthetic hands that would supplant the standard issued NHS 'farmer's hook' which would be printed through a specialist supplier of 3D printed components from CAD drawings. Figure 1 shows the existing 'farmer's hook', which RC intended to re-design, develop and improve, using digital ALM technologies. RC used this device as a starting point to develop a more customised solution, using his particular client as his own design case-study.

Early development work resulted in RC suggesting that he needed to develop a detailed set of sketches and drawings in order to better understand the existing device and how his client was able to operate it as a hand replacement, and how his client had to adjust to various contexts using this prosthetic device. Figure 2 shows one of RC's initial isometric drawings for the original device, providing insight into how RC has started to develop a deeper understanding of the structural and volumetric requirements of the existing prosthesis.

Since a major design requirement of RC's project was the use of new technologies that could capitalise on a CAD environment, RC converted his isometric drawings into a relevant 3D virtual model that would enable him to eventually construct a physical object through the use of ALM techniques. The isometric drawings from Figure 2 were drawn in a particular way enabling RC to understand the complicated geometries involved in the object to be

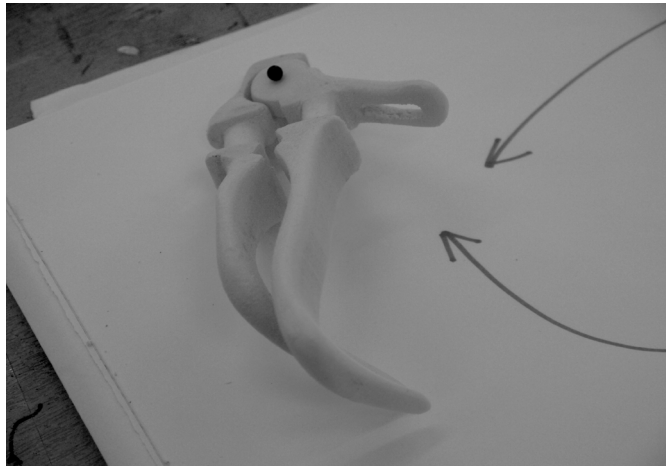
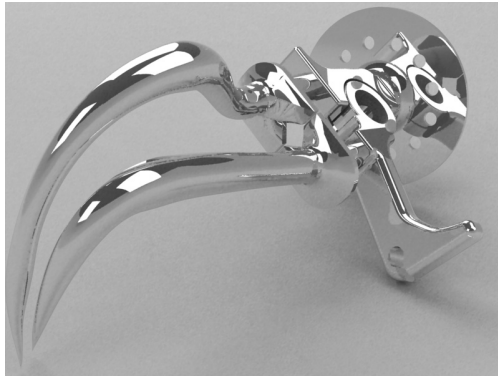


¹The standard 'farmer's hook' distributed to amputees through the NHS. photograph taken by Arno Verhoeven

² Isometric drawing based on original prosthetic, including wireframe lines (blue). photograph taken by Arno Verhoeven

³ CAD model visualization derived from original prosthetic and isometric drawings. photograph taken by Arno Verhoeven

⁴ Blue-foam intermediary object, constructed by hand from blue foam, based on CAD 3D model. photograph taken by Arno Verhoeven



rendered. The blue lines show more clearly how RC was able to develop an analogue wire-frame that he could eventually translate into the CAD environment. Figure 3 provides the results of this translation, highlighting a stylised 3D rendering of the wireframe developed from the isometric drawings, visualising the relevant material finishes of the object in stainless steel.

It became clear to RC that it would be difficult to suggest to his client via conventional 2D drawing, or even a 3D rendering, how any new prosthetic device might work: the physical and mechanical aspects of the device required an exemplar to be produced, and though a final output might ultimately be a cost-effective design solution, the iterative trial and error aspect of prototyping through ALM would possibly prove costly to RC, particularly as a student project. As a solution, it was suggested that an intermediary prototype, simply constructed from blue foam, might suffice to provide detailed information and feedback to both RC and his client, and enable quick, low cost and effective calibrated information as this project moved forward. Figure 4 shows a blue foam model that was created by RC in order to assist in his personal understanding of the technical requirements of the design project in a physical form, but also serve as a physical device that he could share with his client to discuss and generate feedback about his current design decisions before committing to a fully formed, and potentially costly, ALM generated prototype.

Having discussed his interim work with his client, through the introduction of the blue foam model, computer renderings, and associated drawings to support his design rationale and work to date, RC returned to the studio to incorporate the comments and insights from his client, who in this regard could be considered an expert user with a significant understanding of the functional deficiencies and future requirements of his prosthetic hand. RC had outlined that he had a number of changes to make based on this discussion, and immediately set to making revisions to his existing 3D CAD model. Figure 5 is a revised rendering of the intended prosthesis as a result of the discussion between RC and his client. It should be noted the degree of change to shape and form that has resulted in this subsequent iteration of this intermediary object. Figure 6 shows the first printed sample of RC's work, based on the revised rendering from Figure 5, which again provides him with additional information through the translation of the CAD model into a physical form.

As mentioned in the methodology, each tutorial discussion with RC was recorded and transcribed. Each individual tutorial session was thirty minutes in length, and over the course of the semester a total of three individual tutorials took place. Aside from these tutorials, seven group seminars, involving RC and his classmates presenting their work

to the group, and three group presentations, involving additional members of academic staff, were also recorded. For the purposes of this paper, selected excerpts from the three individual tutorials are provided and discussed, related to the intermediary objects illustrated in Figures 1-6.

Discussion

The design process that is outlined in this paper does not seem like an extraordinary set of events; RC's trajectory is very much in line with many product design development processes. What is of interest is one major step; the inclusion of a low-fidelity, made prototype, acting as an intermediary object (Vinck and Jeantet, 1995, Boujut and Blanco, 2003). Given that RC has a variety of tools for designing at his disposal, notably papers and pens for sketching, a computer with relevant software for 3D modeling, and access to ALM printers for production, what is the role and benefit of making something in between? What role does physical making of objects play in helping designer's make sense of their design trajectory?

Our visual pathway shows a continuous series of minor changes between the original prosthetic device and RC's subsequent design proposals. Following the introduction of the blue foam model, illustrated in Figure 4, we see a radical change in form presented in the following CAD model, illustrated in Figure 5. From the illustrations alone, it is not obvious why RC made these changes. In order to develop a clear understanding of his trajectorial shift, notably from a "pincer" to a "tong" aesthetic in the device, a second measure of change is required. In short, we need to ask RC to explain why this change has taken place.

There are a variety of methods of discourse analysis that could prove useful. Historically, research focusing on cognitive aspects of design has employed protocol analysis as a method of understanding designers sense-making (Ericsson and Simon, 1984). For our purposes, in line with approaches from grounded theory, we have instead considered the design tutorials as incidents, and attempted to allow these incidents to occur as naturally as possible; tutorials are conducted in a conversational manner. The tutor and student are recorded discussing concerns about the overall direction of the project for which the student is ultimately responsible. Since we have already described the design process as a trajectory, it is suggested that tutorials do not uncover any particular pathway towards a particular answer; rather, tutorial discussions are intended to uncover ways in which any future interactions might be navigated. Students are engaged to discuss



⁵Virtual model revised following client feedback. photograph taken by Arno Verhoeven

⁶ALM printed model following revisions from client feedback. photograph taken by Arno Verhoeven

what new knowledge has been discovered between meetings, and ways in which students are planning to incorporate that knowledge which should help lead them to their final intentions, which are variable and subject to change. The tutors' role is here seen as a guide, providing insight from experience that students are encouraged to use at their discretion.

From one particular tutorial with RC, we include in figure 7 a section of transcript that provides insight into RCs design decisions between figures 4 and figure 5:

AV: So you've been to the [client] Centre
 RC: yeah
 AV: and you've met [client].
 RC: yeah
 AV: from Motherwell
 RC: yeah
 AV: what's he said, about this?
 RC: Uh, a great deal of things. Ehm, not that he's not full of ideas
 AV: of course
 RC: but the eh ... the prevailing factor was that it was far too big.
 AV: Aahh
 RC: Eh, I uh, I seem to remember the one that he had being bigger, but he had it on again when I met him, and it was, closer to the original size that I was working with.

(partial transcript of conversation between RC and tutor discussing client feedback)

This particular section does not take into account the full discussion regarding the changes that RC has made since the original transcript is far too long for inclusion here. What is of importance is to suggest that the physical model presented to the client starts to suggest things that are otherwise hidden – notably from this particular section, issues of scale. The intermediary object is doing two things of interest: it is speaking to the client in a way that it has not spoken to RC and prompted the client to share his understanding in a particular way; it has also shifted the trajectory of the design process by enabling this discussion to take place and make clear between participants what is actually occurring. Yet, the transcript continues to uncover the amount of information that RC must contend with while steering his project towards resolution; materials, processes of manufacture, details of aesthetics, etc. provide a wealth of information that does not have a particular correct outcome, rather, it is negotiated between our participants, and the intermediary object as a silent actor, assists in making many of these things possible.

Conclusions

Though almost any object could serve as an intermediary object in a true sense, we have here discussed how a simply made, low-fidelity object constructed from simple materials, and often using primitive methods, enables designers to quickly calibrate and navigate the design trajectory in an efficacious manner. Through a sociological framing of the design process, taking into account that numerous actors contribute, often through indirect means, we have attempted to understand the role that making might play in helping designers' sense-making during the design trajectory. This paper has attempted to demonstrate the importance that constructed physical objects play in silently negotiating between other participants. Questions for future research remain, notably the possible relationship to the degree of fidelity and resolution of an intermediary object, and the degree of flexibility provided in shifting the design trajectory between design incidents. Though one particular case study is presented here to support our initial claims about the role and importance of prototyping, many more are required to provide insight to these and many other questions that are posed here.



Arno Verhoeven is a Lecturer in Product Design, and Senior Tutor, Edinburgh College of Art, the University of Edinburgh. His current research examines the liminal spaces between what things appear to be, what these things are called, and what they mean to others. Particular to the design process, he investigates ways that designers come together to make sense, communicate and construct representative future worlds through the use of objects and prototypes, both found and fabricated.

His design research, which views 'craft as strategy' in the design process, is informed by his studio practice, which began following his studies in the Furniture Studio at Sheridan College (CA). He also holds a B.Sc in Social Psychology from the University of Toronto (CA), an M.Des from the Design Academy Eindhoven (NL), and is currently completing a PhD with the Design Group, Open University, Milton Keynes (UK). He is co-founder of the NCN research network, and currently Co-Investigator of the AHRC Network Researching Grant "Naked Craft", examining the postcolonial, geopolitical relationships between local identities and local modes of production across Nova Scotia, Canada and Scotland, UK.

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